

**Identifying Villa Carlota:  
German Settlements in Yucatán, México,  
During the Second Empire (1864-1867)**

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## Abbreviations

AGAY	Archivo General de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán
AGEY	Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán
JC	Justicia Civil
JP	Justicia Penal
I	Iglesia
M-T	Municipios-Ticul
PE	Poder Ejecutivo
RC	Registro Civil
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación
FSS	Fondo Segundo Imperio
AHAY	Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán
ASA	<i>Anhaltinischer Staats-Anzeiger</i>
AAz	<i>Allgemeine Auswanderungszeitung</i>
BNM	Biblioteca Nacional de México
CAIHY	Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán
DI	<i>Diario del Imperio</i>
GStPK	Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz
HAHR	<i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i>
Lrp	<i>La razón del pueblo</i>
ÖSt	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv
KMM	Archiv seiner Majestät des Kaisers Maximilian I. von Mexiko
PoDM	<i>Periódico oficial del Departamento de Mérida</i>
PoDY	<i>Periódico oficial del Departamento de Yucatán</i>
RCSE	Registro Civil de Santa Elena
StAH	Staatsarchiv Hamburg
UTAL	University of Texas at Arlington Libraries. Special Collections Division
SIP	The José Salazar Ilarregui Papers

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## I. Introduction

As it is well known, the United States were the preferred destination of an estimated five and a half million Germans who between 1815 and 1914 migrated overseas.<sup>1</sup> With smaller numbers—only around 300,000—but an important qualitative impact on its hosting societies, the German migration to Latin America has also become an object of scholarly inquiries.

By describing the composition of German migration to México during that time period three assertions have until now prevailed in social-historical migration research. First, that organized German colonization to México from the time of its Independence (1821) until the beginning of the Porfiriato (1877) was just a list of failed attempts which basically remained just on paper. Second, it has been assured that farmers, craftsmen, and people belonging to the lower classes did not migrate there, or if they did, it was just in very small numbers. And third, it has been stated that the German migration into México was almost exclusively an elite migration which, according to Brígida von Mentz, has contributed to a still actual problem "the existence of German Imperialism in México."<sup>2</sup>

However, traveling to the Maya town of Santa Elena, located around 100 kilometers south of Mérida, the capital of the state of Yucatán, one hears that "before the Age of Slavery"<sup>3</sup> hundreds of Germans lived there. Some villagers assure visitors that they are descendents from the *ch'el ma'ako'obo*<sup>4</sup>—and many people remember their stories, which had been handed down through five or six generations. Just a few years ago a museum was opened in town. Among the objects on display there are four mummies. Next to them, a text insinuates that the corpses could perhaps have been children of the German settlers. Based on the official narrative accompanying the exhibit, the foreigners lived there only shortly because they were driven away by the "hostile" villagers.<sup>5</sup> Several questions come up: Could the presumptions that the Germans were rejected be backed up by documental evidence? If the colonists had to abandon the place because of the animosity of the locals, how to explain that until our days some people in Santa Elena proudly claim to be descendents from those pioneers? Were the Germans farmers, indentured laborers, or members of the military corps? These questions have not only not been answered: They have never been asked.

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<sup>1</sup>Jochen OLTMER, 1999, *Eingliederung und Ausgrenzung. Beiträge aus der historischen Migrationsforschung* (Osnabrück: IMIS), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Brígida von MENTZ et al., 1982, *Los pioneros del imperialismo alemán en México* (México: CIESAS), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Meaning, before the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, 1877-1911.

<sup>4</sup>The "blond men," as per the people of Santa Elena. Sometimes, they use it for referring to "blue-eyed" men.

<sup>5</sup>The text posted at Santa Elena's museum is an edited version from: Lourdes MÁRQUEZ MORFÍN y Norberto GONZÁLEZ CRESPO, 1985, *Las momias de la iglesia de Santa Elena, Yucatán* (México: INAH), pp. 33-34.

Continuing with the narrative posted at Santa Elena's Museum, one reads that the Germans were brought there by the Imperial Commissioner, José Salazar Ilarregui. That implies the time of the French Intervention (1862) and subsequent declaration of México as a Monarchy, which culminated with the installation of Maximilian of Habsburg as Emperor (1864-1867). México at that time was still in the midst of a civil war, in which some supported the Empire, others the Republican government of President Benito Juárez. Granted, Yucatán was for the Monarchy, but it was still fighting its own Caste War (1847-1901).<sup>6</sup> Which reasons could the régime have had for taking Europeans to such a dry, remote and convoluted zone? And, on the other hand, what could have attracted foreigners there?

A search for literature about these Germans brings up more questions than answers. These emigrants have been given in Yucatán the character and treatment of a legend, while at national and international levels they have been for many decades practically written off from history. The information until now published is fragmentary, mostly inaccurate, vague or contradictory, and rarely supported by primary sources. In some cases this colony, which was named Villa Carlota, is even mixed up with the Carlota Colony—a military Confederate settlement in the state of Veracruz. Underlying this confusion could be the fact that the colonization projects of the Second Mexican Empire have not been properly studied, as some scholars have pointed out.<sup>7</sup> This negligence could be explained as a consequence of the image given to the Second Empire as being anomalous, volatile, sterile and chaotic in regards to colonization matters: A period during which, judging by some influential but perhaps biased commentators, a huge amount of ink was wasted in plans which were never more than sand castles. And those generalizations have not been questioned yet.

The above mentioned gaps in the existing research reveal the need for a comprehensive analysis. This ethno-historical study at the *mezzo* level<sup>8</sup> seeks to identify what kind of colonization project Villa Carlota was—its objectives, volume, form, participants and

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<sup>6</sup> Originally perceived as a race motivated war, this uprising (1847-1901) in which Maya and non-Maya underprivileged peoples of Yucatán participated, has been reinterpreted as a war with specific political, social and economical objectives. See Wolfgang GABBERT, 2004, *Becoming Maya: Ethnicity and Social Inequality in Yucatán since 1500* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), pp. 46-79. See also Nelson REED, 1964, *The Caste War of Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press); Terry RUGELEY, 1996, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press).

<sup>7</sup> Johann LUBIENSKI, 1988, *Der maximilianeische Staat: Mexiko 1861-1867; Verfassung, Verwaltung und Ideengeschichte* (Wien: Böhlau), p. 102; Erika PANI, 2004, *El Segundo Imperio. Pasados de usos múltiples* (México: FCE), p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> More than as a rigid structure, I use the methodical definitions and analitical framework suggested by the following scholars: Klaus J. BADE, 2004, *Sozialhistorische Migrationsforschung*, (ed.) Michael Bommers and Jochen Oltmer (Göttinger: V.R. Unipress), pp. 27-48; Carlo GINZBURG, 1989, *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press); Jan LUCASSEN and Leo LUCASSEN (ed.), 2005, *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigmas and New Perspectives* (Bern: Peter Lang), pp. 9-38.

structure—while considering its context and consequences. It is a preliminary exploration of this theme, with the intention to develop a starting point from which further research can be undertaken. I will argue that there were indeed two settlements in Yucatán, one in Santa Elena, the other one in Pustunich—which were together referred to as "Villa Carlota"—and that the project was, contrary to what has been assumed, actually reasonably well planned and well-run. In order to demonstrate that, I will track down the origin of the project and its objectives, examine its formation and scope, outline some of the interactions which occurred as a result of this intercultural encounter, and also inquire about some of the factors which led to its breakdown.

Identifying this colonization program could further discussions about transnational migration and its consequences, and make us reflect about the relationship between history and the construction of identities. Additionally, giving visibility to this case of non-elite German migration into México during the Second Empire may help us to identify the existence, contributions and shortcomings of a more numerous and heterogeneous group of participants in the creation of the Mexican state than until now has been acknowledged.

### **A. State of the Art**

Though a new generation of cultural anthropologist is starting to publish studies about migration to Yucatán,<sup>9</sup> the German colonists of Santa Elena have only been the subject of a short essay. Martha Medina Un interviewed an unknown number of inhabitants of that town in order to record their memories about the colonists.<sup>10</sup> Although interesting information came out, the article relies for its historical base on inaccurate information, and no additional primary sources were consulted.

A monograph about Villa Carlota does not exist in English, French, German or Spanish language, while nothing is known about the settlement in Pustunich. Actually, it appears that immigration around the time of the Second Empire is an unpopular theme, perhaps still too controversial, and therefore sometimes avoided by many scholars. I will give two examples: Moisés González Navarro chooses 1877 as a departure point for "La colonización en México,"<sup>11</sup> without giving an overview of the previous years. On his part,

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<sup>9</sup> See for example Jorge VICTORIA OJEDA y Jorge CANTO ALCOCER, 2006, *San Fernando Aké: Microhistoria de una comunidad afroamericana en Yucatán* (Mérida: UADY); Carlos E. BOJÓRQUEZ URZAIZ, 2000, *La emigración cubana en Yucatán, 1868-1898* (Mérida: Imágen Contemporánea).

<sup>10</sup> Martha MEDINA UN, 2001, Migración alemana en Santa Elena, la antigua Nohcacab, *Revista INAJ*, no. 12, pp. 28-31.

<sup>11</sup> Moisés GONZÁLEZ NAVARRO, 1960, *La Colonización en México. 1877-1910* (México: Talleres de Impresión de Estampillas y Valores de México).

George Dieter Berninger, in "La inmigración en México," provides a comprehensive, well documented, clear account of this phenomena and its context during the early National period. The book's limitation, however, resides in the fact that the analysis stops at 1857 under the argument that afterwards no projects were executed until after 1876.<sup>12</sup> True it is that the promulgation of the liberal Constitution in 1857 polarized the country, leading to a civil war, the French Intervention, the establishment of a Monarchy and the coexistence of two parallel conservative and liberal governments. However, all that did not inhibit migration.

A comprehensive study of the Second Empire's colonization program has apparently not been carried out successfully until now,<sup>13</sup> while a short article suggesting a link between Maximilian's colonization program and his Indigenist policy fell short.<sup>14</sup> What has been accomplished is a study of the discussion around the theme migration as published in México City's newspapers, done by Alfred Jackson Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna.<sup>15</sup> Although the Hannas by their analysis pay special attention to the migration of North American Confederate refugees and methodologically favor the use of periodicals, their work constitutes a good source in regards to the public opinion in the country's capital.

Notwithstanding, the presence of German colonists in Yucatán has been briefly mentioned in several books. Albeit at first sight one could get the impression that there is a rather meager information base, it is necessary to keep in mind that most of these works were done many decades ago—when research conditions were more limited—and that actually many sources remain untapped. Information can be found in German and Spanish language literature. Hereby will the works be grouped under those categories, given that a clear line can be identified in regards to the origin of each narrative, its content, the method by which the information was obtained, and the influence of the discourse.

## 1. Literature in German Language

Friedrich Ratzel, who as a geographer visited México in the 1870's, reports mostly about the

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<sup>12</sup>George Dieter BERNINGER, 1974, *La inmigración en México, 1821-1857* (México: SEP/Setentas), pp. 167, 179-180.

<sup>13</sup> A dissertation about this theme was apparently attempted in 1958 at the Universidad Nacional de México, but the results were "entirely unsatisfactory," and it is not available for consultation. See Alfred Jackson HANNA and Kathryn Abbey HANNA, 1971, *Napoleon III and Mexico. American Triumph over Monarchy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), p. 337.

<sup>14</sup> Although with serious writing, methodological and structural shortcomings, it could be interesting to revisit this theme in the future. See Silvia LUBIENSKI, 1999, Integración e inmigración en el Segundo Imperio, in: *La definición del Estado Mexicano, 1857-1867*, (ed.) Patricia Galeana (México: UNAM), pp. 167-176.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Jackson HANNA and Kathryn Abbey HANNA, 1947, The Immigration Movement of the Intervention and Empire as Seen through the Mexican Press, *HAHR* (Please note that this magazine is referred to by its initials, which stand for Hispanic American Historical Review), no. 27, pp. 220-246.

disintegration of the colony as an indirect witness; but it is unclear whether he uses primary testimonies or secondary witnesses. The information is vague, biased and contains a good number of inaccuracies, as it will be shown later. This narrative—with all its already mentioned characteristics—has been reproduced by many researchers, becoming some sort of an unquestionable truth. In synthesis, it says that during Maximilian's Empire 500 German colonists were taken to Yucatán by initiative of a Mr. von Hiller, who made a good business out of this enterprise. The settlers were taken to Santa Elena and allegedly left abandoned there. Many died victims of the weather and diseases "und wer nicht zurückkehren vermochte verkam."<sup>16</sup>

Wilhelm Pferdekamp, who worked in México in the 1930's, would years later provide the same account as Ratzel, adding a few more details, and citing a conference by Hermann Jeth in México City as a source.<sup>17</sup> Time later, Marianne Oeste de Bopp reproduced the same accounts.<sup>18</sup> Most scholars working on this thematic thereafter have relied on Bopp, without conducting any further research. This discourse has been used as a proof of the Second Empire's failures in matters of colonization, as an argument to support the image of Maximilian as a highly inefficient stateman, and as one of the points of departure to assume that there was not enough proletarian German migration into México worth to justify a study.

## 2. Literature in Spanish Language

In "Noventa años de historia de Yucatán" Carlos L. Menéndez González has included some brief, anecdotal information about the *colonos alemanes*.<sup>19</sup> A selective compilation very much tied to the official and economical sectors of its time, it does not dare to inquire, evaluate or try to understand. Given the formal structure of the book, no sources are referred to neither.

The German colonists are also briefly mentioned in "Los extranjeros en México," unfortunately as short, unconnected, pieces of information sprinkled in different parts of a text. Often are the context and connections of the data unclear, and at certain point

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich RATZEL, 1969 [1878], *Aus Mexico: Reiseskizzen aus den Jahren 1874 und 1875* (Brockhaus: Stuttgart), pp. 377-378.

<sup>17</sup> Wilhelm PFERDEKAMP, 1958, *Auf Humbolts Spuren: Deutsche im jungen Mexiko* (München: Hueber), pp. 179-180. A printed report from Jeth has been located, whose information is very close, inaccuracies and all, to that referred to by Pferdekamp. See: Herm[ann] JETH, 1889, *Sklavenhandel unter falscher Flagge. Ein unparteiisches Wort über Land und Leute von Mexiko* (Berlin: Sittenfel), pp. 3-4.

<sup>18</sup> Marianne Oeste de BOPP, 1965, *Maximiliano y los alemanes* (México: Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística), p. 264; Marianne Oeste de BOPP, 1979, *Die Deutschen in Mexico*, in: *Die Deutschen in Lateinamerika: Schicksal und Leistung*, (ed.) Hartmut Fröschle (Tübingen: Erdmann), pp. 475-564, here p. 485.

<sup>19</sup> Carlos R. MÉNENDEZ GONZÁLEZ, 1937, *Noventa años de historia de Yucatán, 1821-1910 [...]* (Mérida: Compañía Tipográfica Yucateca), pp. 221, 347, 387.



information about Villa Carlota and the Carlota Colony is mixed up.<sup>20</sup> Even though some of the footnotes are inaccurate, a few lead to other usable sources.

This information, along with Bopp's in Spanish, has been used as reference for short articles and theses in México, unfortunately without consulting additional primary sources or considering other methodologies which could allow for researchers to overcome the intrinsic limitations of the above mentioned works. This has generated a regional narrative in which relatively limited, largely uninformed, and even nonsensical versions of the life of the German colonists prevail. The main problem, perhaps, is that the discussion takes place in a vacuum, because a ground study about the colonization project has not been done yet.

## B. Sources

The objective of this study and the preceding state of the art make clear three requirements: First, besides the social-historical conditions in Yucatán, it is indispensable to consider the colonization program of the Second Empire as a context. Second, primary and secondary sources have to be consulted. And third, an interdisciplinary, intercultural perspective will be productive.

This study will incorporate four kinds of primary sources: Contemporary accounts which until now have not been consulted in regards to this theme; published compilations of documents deposited in different archival collections; as well as manuscripts and contemporaneous newspapers, which were consulted in the course of four six-week research sessions between the years of 2002 and 2006, in a total of 11 institutional archives in Austria, Germany, México, and the United States of America.

A group portrait of the settlers is made using the passengers lists obtained from the Staatsarchiv Hamburg. Some diplomatic aspects relating to the Villa Carlotans are clarified thanks the consultation of documents housed at the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, in Berlin. Also in Germany were the *Auswanderungszeitung*, the *Anhaltinischer Staats-Anzeiger*, and *Das Ausland* consulted.

The information necessary to establish the objectives and operation of the colonies—as well as to develop a chronology of their life, and to comprehend their national, regional and local context—was obtained from different archives: The Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, in Vienna, Austria; the Archivo General de la Nación and the Biblioteca Nacional, in México City; the Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán and the Centro de

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<sup>20</sup> Moisés GONZÁLEZ NAVARRO, 1993, *Los extranjeros en México y los mexicanos en el extranjero 1821-1970*, vol. 1 (México: COLMEX), pp. 509, 514-515.

Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán<sup>21</sup>—these last two located in the city of Mérida. Some of the documents here analyzed reflect the interests and dilemmas of functionaries of the Imperial régime, others inform about their interactions with the settlers, and a few letters written by the colonists themselves in German language provide the point of view of the settlers. The books of the Registro Civil de Santa Elena, as well as those from the Archivo General de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán, bring light into the interactions between the colonists and some members of their hosting society, while the clergy's correspondence consulted at the Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán shows the challenges brought about by the settlement of a large group of foreigners, some of whom were Protestant, in small rural communities, and constitutes a window through which the role played by the representatives of the Catholic Church can be outlined. In order to determine the imagery promoted by the régime regarding the settlers, articles from several newspapers, among them the *Periódico oficial* issued in the state of Yucatán<sup>22</sup> and the *Diario del Imperio* (México City) will be incorporated.<sup>23</sup> Finally, documents from the José Salazar Ilarregui Papers, housed by the University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, in the USA, provide information about the collapse of Villa Carlota and the following Diaspora.

Additionally, secondary sources will be incorporated with specific goals: In order to approach the Second Mexican Empire's colonization program—both at national and regional levels—and to bring up relevant historical and anthropological aspects of the receiving society.

### C. Objective, Method and Structure

The objective of this thesis is to examine Villa Carlota within its contemporary context through written primary and secondary sources. The object of study is then this colonization project, concentrating in the years 1864 until 1867, but also incorporating its background and outlining some of its consequences. The context here encompasses three levels: An international one, obvious in any migration process; a national one, namely that of the Second Empire; and the regional-local level, meaning Yucatán and the specific communities where the settlements were located. This last level will nevertheless remain as major point of

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<sup>21</sup> These two Yucatecan archives underwent a reclassification process between 2002 and 2006. Therefore, the nomenclature of some record groups, subsections or file numbers might present variations.

<sup>22</sup> This official Imperial newspaper in Yucatán changed its name three times: *La nueva época* (Jan.-Sept. 1864), *Periódico oficial de Mérida* (Oct.-Dec. 1864), and *Periódico oficial del Departamento de Yucatán* (Jan. 1865-Mar. 1867).

<sup>23</sup> In Yucatán, there was only a very limited and short-lived presence of opposition or independent newspapers, such as *La pildora* or *La cola del mus*. They did not, however, take a position about immigration matters.

reference, paying special consideration to the fact that, as I will show in this thesis, the colonists did not live in isolated areas, which was the case in the majority of the settlements in South America,<sup>24</sup> but within already existing small Maya communities.

As reflected by the question guiding this exploration and the nature of the primary sources used in it for answering it, the focus is the encounter and interactions of some of the different participants, agendas and cultures, involved in the settlement process of the Villa Carlottans. So, this thesis does not attempt an exhaustive analysis of the ideology behind the colonization policy of Maximilian's régime, nor to track all its continuities and changes in a historical context, even though these aspects are considered as a frame of reference. Another limitation of the approach is a result of the sources available and the method selected, which privileges the points of view of the groups of interest, namely the Second Empire, who gave form to the project and the expectations of the German colonizers, including only a few aspects of the experience of the inhabitants of the location where the foreigners settled, which would require a different methodological approach and a separate examination.

With this clarification of the object of study, the method discussed above and the intention to present a comprehensive perspective, the use of a thematic and chronological structure will allow for a clearer analysis. Chapter II provides a background to examine the factors leading to the development and execution of the plan to colonize Yucatán with Germans in two stages: First, it offers an overview of German migration to Latin America, followed by a summary of the Mexican colonization policies—both at ideological and practical levels—prior to the Empire, and then moves on to analyze its change and continuity during Monarchical México. As mentioned before, almost nothing is known about the colonists who responded to the Maximilian's offer. In Chapter III, therefore, I present a socio-economical group portrait of the settlers, which, I hope will be useful for understanding not only what kind of cultural capital—in the sense proposed by Pierre Bourdieu<sup>25</sup>—the settlers possessed, but will shed light into how the Second Empire proceeded by the formation of the colonies and will highlight some of the ramifications at diplomatic level it brought about.

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<sup>24</sup> Just to mention a few examples, one could consider the cases of Osorio and Valdivia in Chile, that of Tovar in Venezuela, Pozuzo in Perú and most of the colonies in Brasil, such as Blumenau. See: Peter WALDMANN, 1988, *Conflicto cultural y adaptación paulatina: La evolución de las colonias de inmigrantes alemanes en el sur de Chile*, *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas*, no. 25; Conrad KOCH, 1969, *La Colonia Tovar: Geschichte und Kultur einer alemannischen Siedlung in Venezuela* (Basel: Pharos); Bruno HABICHER, 2001, *Pozuzo. Schicksal, Hoffnung, Heimat. Briefe, Berichte, Kommentare* (Innsbruck: Berenkamp); Robert GERNHARD, 1901, *Doña Francisca, Hansa und Blumenau, drei deutsche Mustersiedlungen im südbrasilianischen Staate Santa Catharina* (Breslau: Schlesische Verlagsanstalt).

<sup>25</sup> Pierre BOURDIEU, 1986 [1983], *The Forms of Capital*, in: *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, (ed.) John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood), pp. 241-258.

Chapter IV is dedicated to reconstructing, even if with broad strokes, the life of the Villa Carlota Colony, from its settlement process to its collapse.

#### D. Terminology

Even though the terms migration and colonization were used interchangeably during the nineteenth century both in México and in Yucatán, and several scholars make use of them in the same form, I consider that doing so can lead to misunderstandings and inhibit a proper analysis of the material. Therefore, a distinction will be set by defining "migration" as a permanent or semi permanent change of residence,<sup>26</sup> mostly—but not exclusively—of individual nature and initiative. Therefore, the processes of immigration and emigration could involve all kinds of immigrants, from elite to mass migration. In contrast, "colonization" is in this text specifically referred to a State's migration policy and incentives to attract new, mostly organized group migration into rural, uncultivated areas, with the purpose of land cultivation and sometimes cattle raising, which corresponds to the German concept of an *Ackerbaukolonie*. Thus, "colonization" here excludes individual, elite migration.

When referring to "Germans," it is hereby meant German-speaking people. Given that the settlers of Villa Carlota identified themselves as *colonos* (colonizers)—or its singular, *colono*—in official correspondence, and they were referred to by the authorities also as such, those terms would be used in this examination.<sup>27</sup> The English words "colonist", "colonizer" and "settler" serve as synonyms. Under the term "Villa Carlotans" are the colonists of the Villa Carlota program from both locations, Santa Elena and Pustunich, encompassed.

In contrast to the *peninsulares*, Spanish citizens living in America, *criollos* refers to the first generation of Spanish settlers' descendents, already born in Latin America. As "Hispanics" or "*mestizos*" I understand persons of Spanish descent, preserving more or less their speech and culture, but not necessarily of "white race" (phenotype and descend). This profile corresponds more to the Yucatecan reality, where a heavy miscegenation since the beginning of the National period has been experienced. In the case of inhabitants of a specific Yucatecan region, the reference will be to the *yucatecos* or the *meridanos*, meaning members of the oligarchy, usually formed by Hispanics, living in the state of Yucatán and the city of Mérida respectively.<sup>28</sup> These people were mostly landowners, and there are here also referred

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<sup>26</sup> LUCASSEN and LUCASSEN 2005, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> The term "colono" had different connotations in Yucatán. This issue will be addressed in Chapter II.

<sup>28</sup> The theme of race and identity in Yucatán is very complex. For a detailed analysis of the development of social and ethnic categories in Yucatán, see GABBERT 2004.

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to as such or by their Spanish equivalent, *hacendados* and *terratenientes*.

For the indigenous population, the terms *indígena* and Maya are used as synonyms. I refrain from using "peasant," "Indian," or *indio*, given their derogatory connotation. Because until our days the people of Santa Elena and Pustunich identify themselves as *campesinos*, *labradores* or *milperos*—meaning that they are independent farmers dedicated mostly to subsistence agriculture, who live in the traditional Maya way—I use those terms in my writing.

The rebels who took part in the Caste War of Yucatán are hereby referred to as the *cruzoob*.<sup>29</sup>

### E. Style and Formatting

Given the subject and perspective of this thesis, sources in five languages are used. Both in quotations as in bibliographical references, the original spelling is reproduced. In the main body of this thesis, Mexican geographical names keep their original spelling. For text production, spelling authorities were consulted in Spanish,<sup>30</sup> Yucatecan Maya<sup>31</sup> and American English.<sup>32</sup> Because some words or titles do not have a close enough equivalent in English which preserves both the flavor and the meaning intended, they are hereby used in original, providing as needed either a short appended translation or a longer footnote with further explanation. A glossary of the most frequently used terms is included as Appendix D.

In accordance with the style and documentation formatting followed in this thesis, namely the Chicago Style, non-English, unfamiliar, isolated words are italicized only the first time they appear in text.<sup>33</sup> All translations of foreign language citations are my responsibility, unless otherwise noted. Besides the normal uses of brackets, these are here set to signal: Publishing information of a book's first edition; a translation in a footnote [T:]; and that information in a manuscript presents one or more letters difficult to read with certainty [?].

Contemporary weights and measurements are kept as such in this text, providing their equivalence.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Meaning "followers of the cult of the cross." Although this term was meagerly used by the rebels as self-identification (See GABBERT 2004, pp. 53-54), it is at the moment the more widely used in scholarly literature.

<sup>30</sup> LAROUSE diccionario básico de la lengua española, 1989 (México: Larouse).

<sup>31</sup> DICCIONARIO CORDEMEX, 1980 (Mérida: CORDEMEX).

<sup>32</sup> AMERICAN Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1992 (Houghton: Boston).

<sup>33</sup> Kate TURABIAN L., 2007, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

<sup>34</sup> As reference have served: Ferdinand ANDERS, 1974, *Erzherzog Ferdinand Maximilian und das Segundo Imperio Mexicano: Wissenschaft, Münzen und Medaillen, Ordenswesen, Philatelie* (Wien: Eizenhofen); LEXIKON der Maße und Gewichte, 1982 (Gütersloh: Lexikothek).

## II. Foreign Colonization in México: A Problematic Issue

This chapter has four sections. The first one offers a few notes about German migration to Latin America towards the middle of the nineteenth century, focusing on agrarian colonies.<sup>1</sup> After that, a non-exhausting overview of some of México's reasons, efforts and experiences by attempting to attract mass colonization is presented, covering from the Independence (1821) until the start of the Regency (1863). The third section is dedicated to analyzing the colonization policy of the Second Empire at national level, while the fourth segment concentrates in its application in Yucatán. What was the function assigned to the colonists in the Mexican and Yucatecan societies? How were colonies to be planned and why? What was the government's role in all of these? It is within this line of questioning, that the migration policies and endeavors to win German colonists will be analyzed. This approach seems appropriate for two reasons. First, only by pondering the colonization attempts and their circumstances could it be possible to go beyond a simple listing of failures. And, second, in order to overcome the tendency to overlook Villa Carlota as an isolated, exotic project, or reduce it down to one more predictable *fiasco*, it is necessary to identify its precedents and their context.

### A. German Migration to Latin America towards the Middle of the Nineteenth Century

Although migration was, and is, a normal social and cultural phenomenon in the development of European societies, it has had different reasons, characteristics and impact within the various historical time frames in which it occurred.<sup>2</sup> During the "lange 19. Jahrhundert,"<sup>3</sup> that is from 1815 until 1914, several factors such as the change from an agrarian to an industrial society, population growth, and other social, economical and political challenges swayed millions of Europeans to migrate.<sup>4</sup>

For Germany, three major waves of mass migration—1846-1857, 1864-1873 and 1880-1883—have been proposed.<sup>5</sup> Some members of the middle to upper classes migrated either because of new business opportunities or motivated by ideological or religious reasons,

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<sup>1</sup> That is, on farming colonies or agrarian settlements, in opposition to individual elite migration.

<sup>2</sup> BADE 2004, pp. 13-15.

<sup>3</sup> Term used by BADE, see Klaus J. BADE, 2000, *Europa in Bewegung. Migration vom späten 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (München: Beck), p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed analysis by country of the different forms of emigration and the push-pull factors behind them, see *ibidem*, pp. 85-185.

<sup>5</sup> Klaus J. BADE und Jochen OLTMER, 2003, Zwischen Aus- und Einwanderungsland: Deutschland und die Migration seit der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts, *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, no. 28:2-4, pp. 799-842, here p. 806.

but they represented a minority,<sup>6</sup> meaning that most of the emigrants belonged to the lower-middle and the lower classes. In some cases when the emigrants could not afford to finance their own transportation overseas,<sup>7</sup> alternative destinations to the United States were considered. And South America offered some opportunities.

After winning their independence from the Spanish Crown as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, almost all Latin American countries saw themselves as rich in natural resources but short in people who could exploit them. Attempting to emulate the European and North American models of development, some intellectual groups in the newly independent nations accepted many of the evolutionist, social and racial theories of their time, considering the *mestizos* and *indígenas*—or mulattos and blacks, depending on the country—not only as a problem for the creation of a new national identity, but also as incapable of contributing to the project of modernization they wished to pursue.<sup>8</sup> White migration was proposed as the solution to both problems. Simón Bolívar stated the urgency to

fomentar la inmigración de las gentes de Europa y de la América del Norte, para que se establezcan aquí trayendo sus artes y sus ciencias: estas ventajas, un gobierno independiente, escuelas gratuitas y los matrimonios con europeos y angloamericanos, cambiarían todo el carácter del pueblo y lo harían ilustrado y próspero.<sup>9</sup>

Even though he referred to Colombia, this vision assuring that the indigenous people needed to be "whitened" or "educated"—in the best of cases, eliminated in the worst—was popular among the *criollo* elites.<sup>10</sup>

In Europe, members from different social groups seized the opportunities offered by Latin America. But colonizers, meaning farmers and artisans, were specially wanted by the receiving societies, to the point that in public discourse migration became synonymous with

<sup>6</sup> BADE 2000, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> Some of the expenses colonists were faced with are presented in Markus GÜNTHER, 2005, *Auf dem Weg in die Neue Welt. Die Atlantiküberquerung im Zeitalter der Massenauswanderung 1818-1914* (Augsburg: Wißner), pp. 32-33.

<sup>8</sup> Cécile LECLERCQ, 2004, *El lagarto en busca de una identidad. Cuba: identidad nacional y mestizaje* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert), p. 75; Germán CARRERA, 1957, Sobre la "colonomanía," *Historia Mexicana*, no. 64, pp. 597-610, here pp. 600-601. Carrera compares in his essay the development of the discourse about immigration from the beginning until the middle of the nineteenth century in Brazil, México, Perú and Venezuela.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in CARRERA 1957, p. 600. [T: Immigration from North Americans and Europeans ought to be promoted. These immigrants would bring to us their arts and sciences. The character of the local people would improve; they would become more knowledgeable and prosperous, thanks to the contact and intermarriage with these foreigners, an independent government and an open educational system].

<sup>10</sup> Leopoldo ZEA, 1956, *Las ideas en Iberoamérica en el siglo XIX* (La Plata: Universidad Nacional), pp. 30-35. See also LECLERCQ 2004, pp. 66-77.

colonization.<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact that there were communal settlements initiated by liberal intellectuals or idealists from the upper classes, for example Blumenau in Brazil or El Mirador in México, these were but a few. The majority of the farming colonies in Latin America attracted people from the lower-middle to deprived classes. There were organized groups as well as individual immigrants. Chain migration worked through personal networks, in which the contents of letters favoring destinations played a major role. But there were also other incentives, like free transportation and land, various subsidies, as well as tax and military service exceptions. While Argentina and Chile attracted steadily a few hundred colonists a year and Brazil several thousands, only an insignificant number of immigrants arrived to México.<sup>12</sup> Why did the governmental goal of attracting mass migration into México not crystallize? Some of the reasons will be explored in the following.

### **B. México's Colonization before the Regency**

From the beginning of the National period (1821), foreign immigration was considered in México as a development policy. Believing themselves in the myth of the "*riqueza mexicana*,"<sup>13</sup> the criollos thought that thousands of Europeans would storm to take advantage of all the country's resources. In reality, México still presented too many drawbacks, such as the lack of governmental funds to help immigrants get settled, political and economic instability, deficient infrastructure, lack of security and religious intolerance.<sup>14</sup> From the 1820's to the 60's there were slight variations in the social functions assigned to migration and the ways to go about fostering it.

Following will a compilation of the documented colonization efforts involving Germans set in a historical context be presented, using as a departure point Dieter George Berninger's periodical classification of México's migration policy. However, the following issues deserve in advance special attention.

First, there seems to be only a very limited dialog between the studies who deal with German colonization efforts and those which specialize in migration to México from the

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<sup>11</sup> BERNINGER 1974, pp. 19, 184.

<sup>12</sup> Walther L. BERNECKER, 1993, Siedlungskolonien und Elitenwanderung. Deutsche in Lateinamerika: das 19. Jahrhundert, *Matices. Zeitschrift zu Lateinamerika, Spanien und Portugal*, <http://www.is-koeln.de/matices/15/15ssiedl.htm>, (accessed June 23, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Referring to the image of México as a country of unlimited agricultural and mineral resources. See Walther L. BERNECKER, 2003, El mito de la riqueza mexicana. Alejandro de Humboldt. Del analista al propagandista, in: *Alejandro de Humboldt. Una nueva visión del mundo [...] (México: UNAM)*, pp. 95-101.

<sup>14</sup> Walther L. BERNECKER, 1989, Intolerancia religiosa e inmigración en México (Siglo XIX), in: *Iglesia, religión y sociedad en la historia latinoamericana 1492-1945 [...], vol. 3*, (Szeged: CEHAL), pp. 45-69; BOPP 1979, pp. 479-480; VON MENTZ et al., 1982, pp. 393-409.



point of view of the receiving society. This could be in part explained by the challenge posed by a restricted availability of the sources—very much scattered and written in several languages—the complexity of the historical context in which the events took place, and to the minimal attention non-elite immigrants in México have received until now. Most of the research has focused on elite migration, that is in the business motivated *Auslandsdeutsche*, the so-called *Handelskonquistadoren*.<sup>15</sup> The emphasis is placed on the contributions, interests, strategies, resistance to assimilation, and influence of this elite migration on the receiving society.<sup>16</sup> Does it mean there were no "poor" German immigrants in México? Perhaps not. While some scholars briefly label artisans and workers as "one or another alien element" in contrast to the *Auslandsdeutsche*,<sup>17</sup> others affirm that "normal" immigrants from the lower classes, such as farmers, artisans or shopkeepers, were simply not attracted at all by México as a destination<sup>18</sup> or dismiss them as just a few cases of indigent Germans.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, there are also reports stating that already in the 1840's there were 4.5 percent of German immigrants registered as poor, day laborers, plowmen or indigent.<sup>20</sup> In any case, research of non-elite German migration to México is until our days a gap to be filled out.<sup>21</sup>

The second aspect refers to Berninger's proposed periodization itself. As mentioned in the introduction, he pretty much selected his period of analysis within the traditional approach to Mexican history—Colony, Independence, Reforma, Porfiriato and Revolution—leaving out the French Intervention and Second Empire. Although this is

<sup>15</sup> Term introduced by BERNECKER. See Walther L. BERNECKER, 1988a, *Die Handelskonquistadoren. Europäische Interessen und mexikanischer Staat im 19. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Steiner).

<sup>16</sup> Writings on the theme of German elite migration to México are fairly extensive. Besides BOPP 1979 and von MENTZ et al. 1982, see: Walther L. BERNECKER, 1988b, Los alemanes en el México decimonónico: cuantificación, estructura socioprofesional, posturas político-ideológicas, *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas*, no. 25, pp. 385-414; Walther L. BERNECKER, 1998, Einheimische und Fremde. Deutsche im Mexiko des 19. Jahrhunderts, in *Der Fremde im Dorf. Überlegungen zum Eigenen und zum Fremden in der Geschichte*, (ed.) Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg und Beate Eschment (Lüneburg: Institut Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk), pp. 445-474; Jürgen BUCHENAU, 2001, Small Numbers, Great Impact: Mexico and Its Immigrants, 1821-1973, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, no. 20:3, pp. 23-49; Brígida VON MENTZ, 2001, Notas sobre la presencia alemana en la economía y la sociedad mexicanas del siglo XIX, in: *Las relaciones germano-mexicanas. Desde el aporte de los hermanos Humboldt hasta el presente*, (coord.) León E. Bieber (México: COLMEX), pp. 131-141.

<sup>17</sup> Marianne Oeste de BOPP, 1963, Una curiosidad bibliográfica, *Historia Mexicana*, no. 12, pp. 117-122, here p. 117.

<sup>18</sup> Brígida VON MENTZ, 1992, *México en el siglo XIX visto por los alemanes* (México: UNAM), pp. 454-455.

<sup>19</sup> VON MENTZ et al. 1982, pp. 435.

<sup>20</sup> BERNECKER 1988b, pp. 393.

<sup>21</sup> Although recent studies have began to approach this theme taking other cultural groups as subjects. For example, Sonia Pérez Toledo has centered her attention on the Spanish migration to México during the Second Empire, revealing, among other insights, that migration remained stable in numbers in reference to the previous decades—correcting the assumption that there was almost no "normal" immigration into Imperial México—and second, that the socio-economic profile of the immigrants does not position them as a privileged group. See Sonia PÉREZ TOLEDO, 1999, Los españoles de la ciudad de México durante el Segundo Imperio, in: *España y el Imperio de Maximiliano*, (ed.) Clara E. Lida (México: COLMEX), pp. 261-293.

explainable by considering that Berninger's book was published in the 1970's, recent research points to the need to reconsider this division. Therefore, some observations will be hereby posed as necessary.

### 1. Initial Stage

During the 1820's and 30's, some of the immigration policy's bases were set. However, colonization was inhibited by the governmental lack of economic resources, inexperience in relation to migration, excessive and inapplicable legislation, a lack of continuity in governmental structure, and false notions about the country and its possibilities.<sup>22</sup>

The arguments in favor of mass migration, which remained relatively unchanged during most of the nineteenth century, were expressed at practical and ideological levels: Economical, social and agricultural development, population growth, an increase in skilled laborers, strategic defense against the United States, as well as a so-called "taming" and "civilizing" of the indígenas.<sup>23</sup> This notion of foreign immigration as a "social panacea,"<sup>24</sup> as a kind of cure-all remedy, was shared by the Mexican political and economic oligarchies.

The disagreements were more about which groups were desirable as colonists. The discussion was polarized. On the one side, the Conservatives rejected Protestant immigrants and desired to colonize remote areas with Mexican citizens—mostly indígenas, but also convicts. On the other, the Liberals preferred foreign colonists. The balance tilted in favor of Europeanization, given that the colonization with foreigners was regarded as not only a quantitative, but qualitative improvement. The criollo's image of the ideal immigrant—which also prevailed during a good part of the nineteenth century—corresponded to a farmer, head of family, full of virtues, physically strong, and madly in love with his work. He desired to work alone in remote areas, was respectful of the authorities, apolitical, and extremely skillful by making generous gardens out of deserts.<sup>25</sup> But artisans, industrial laborers, farmers, fishermen, and miners were also wanted. Irish and Catholic Germans were preferred because they were considered hard workers and Anglophobes, but there was also the image of the Germans as the ones more in need of leaving their country.<sup>26</sup> At this early stage the

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<sup>22</sup> BERNINGER 1974, pp. 18, 51-52.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 21-34; BERNECKER 1989, pp. 59-60.

<sup>24</sup> Term used by BERNECKER 1989, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> BERNINGER 1974, pp. 45, 184. This scholar suggests that the criollos nurtured an idyllic view of rural migration, which made them blind to foreign immigrants living in the cities.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 30, 62-63.

assimilation of the *colonos* was already discussed and it was even considered to set them in mixed colonies with Mexicans.

The criollos did not consider it difficult to attract European immigrants and believed that the State needed only to provide some guidelines and legislation.<sup>27</sup> Despite that passivity two important settlements were attempted and their failure impacted the future political interest in colonization and its policies: One with Frenchmen in the Coatzacoalco region and a second one with North American families in Texas.<sup>28</sup> This last one ended up in México losing half of its territory some years later.

Additionally, six attempts to found settlements with German-speaking people were recorded during that period, but none of them had a favorable outcome: Two projects proposed by Swiss men had to be declined in 1826 and 1830 due to a governmental lack of funds to support them.<sup>29</sup> In 1833 Baron Johann von Racknitz attempted to found a settlement near the town of Bastrop, close to the Colorado River, in Texas. Most of the colonists died of cholera and the survivors dispersed.<sup>30</sup> A year later, around 200 individual migrants were living in El Mirador in the state of Veracruz, a *freie Gemeinde* originally conceived as a colonization project by Karl Christian Sartorius and the brothers Wilhelm and Gustav Stein. After a few years, the colony as such dissolved, mostly because of internal problems, turning into a family-owned *hacienda* and a social meeting point for German travelers, artists and scientists of the time.<sup>31</sup> In 1834 Eduard Ludecus arrived as a colonist—along with other Irish, French and German settlers—to establish the Villa Dolores Colony in Texas, a project initiated by a North American businessmen. The colony fell apart that same year.<sup>32</sup> A little later, Johann von Racknitz attempted in 1835, for a second time, to found a settlement in the state of Tamaulipas, close to the Rio Nueces. Mostly because of bureaucratic and organizational deficiencies, he was unable to fulfill the concession's terms. In 1843 the colonization prerogative expired.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 32, 36. As a result of these efforts, the first Commission of Colonization was formed in 1822, which presented several projects to the Congress.

<sup>28</sup> The Coatzacoalco and Texas projects are detailed in: *Ibidem*, pp. 69-72, 74-84.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

<sup>30</sup> See: Louis E. BRISTER, 1994, Johann von Racknitz: Ein Württemberger an der Spitze der deutschen Auswanderung nach Texas 1832-1841, *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*, no. 53, pp. 227-261.

<sup>31</sup> PFERDEKAMP 1958, p. 152-174. See also the essay from Beatriz SCHARRER, Estudio de caso: el grupo familiar de empresarios Stein-Sartorius, in: VON MENTZ, et.al., 1982, pp. 233-286.

<sup>32</sup> Eduard LUDECUS, 1837, *Reise durch die mexikanischen Provinzen Tamaulipas, Coahuila und Texas im Jahre 1834* (Leipzig: Hartknoch); *BEALES Colony on the Rio Grande*, <http://www.tamu.edu/ccbn/dewitt/beales.htm>, (accessed June 23, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> BRISTER 1994; PFERDEKAMP 1958, pp. 174-176; Johann von RACKNITZ, 1836, *Kurze und getreue Belehrung für deutsche und schweizerische Auswanderer, welche an der Begründung der Colonie Johann v. Racknitz, im mexicanischen Freistaate Tamaulipas gelegen, Theil nehmen wollen* (Stuttgart: Imle und Kraus).

As it is possible to see, though reduced, Germans showed interest in establishing colonies in México. It is important here to notice that the initiatives came from non-Mexican entrepreneurs, and that the participation of the Mexican state, who was limited financially and a novice in colonization matters, was minimal.

## 2. Urgency and Continuity

Berninger proposes that this stage goes from the 1840's to 1854. The lost war against the United States (1846-1848) and the lack of economic perspective, along with the Indigenous uprisings in the Sierra Gorda, La Huasteca and Yucatán, led to both a sense of urgency in the defensive aspects of colonization and to an unabashed emphasis on the role of the colonizers as educators or missionaries.<sup>34</sup> The elite saw México as being endangered by two forces: North American expansionism and the native rebels. The first one had to be kept away, the second ones tamed. Foreign immigration was now positioned as the only hope for the country, an idea that would mark the political discourse for decades to come.

In 1846 was the Dirección de Colonización e Industria created (Direction of Colonization and Industry), to be later, in 1853, incorporated into the Ministerio de Colonización (Ministry of Colonization). This organism planted the seeds of a liberal immigration policy: It took the first steps towards a more active role by recruiting colonizers and was in favor of using the press as a vehicle for gaining public favor. The Mexican authorities initiated relationships with foreign diplomats and reached out to different German emigration societies trying to win their favor in channeling mass migration into México.<sup>35</sup>

This generated an interest in books, pamphlets and reports—usually written by German citizens living in México—where the country was evaluated, in some cases even proposed, as a possible destination. Examples would be the strivings of Karl Christian Sartorius between 1848 and 1850, who during one of his stays in Germany renewed his efforts to attract settlers to México. He founded a migration association and issued the book "Mexico als Ziel für Deutsche Auswanderer." In this publication, which was translated into Spanish two years later, he presented his opinions about the country, its inhabitants and resources, while attempting to position it as appropriate for German colonization.<sup>36</sup> In a separate endeavor, the Berliner Verein zur Centralization deutscher Auswanderung und

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<sup>34</sup> BERNINGER 1974, pp. 137-138, 149-150.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 139-141.

<sup>36</sup> BERNECKER 1989, pp. 57; Carl [Christian Wilhelm] SARTORIUS, 1852, *Importancia de México para la emigración alemana [...]* (México: n.p.).

Colonization, under the authorship of B. von Boguslawski, published in 1851 a book entitled "Ueber deutsche Colonisation in Mexico." In it, the above mentioned migration society concluded that despite its potential, México could not be recommended as a destination.<sup>37</sup>

Recapping: No German colonies are so far documented during this period. A scant interest in México existed, in spite of the rather negative reports from diplomats, business people, newspapers and travelers.<sup>38</sup>

During this term models for military and mixed colonies were considered too, as well as ways to finance them. Different options to promote a quick assimilation of the foreigners into the receiving society were proposed, but without overlooking the issue that the underprivileged local population also required support.<sup>39</sup> Also to keep in mind is that for the first time the idea of colonizing Yucatán with Europeans was considered.<sup>40</sup> But still, the lack of funds to subsidize colonies, a polarized political discussion around religion and foreign immigration, and the continuous unrest of the country took a toll on all efforts.<sup>41</sup> However, some of the ideas and experiences generated during this time would come back to life not only at the beginning of La Reforma (The Reform),<sup>42</sup> but, as it will be shown in this thesis, also during the Second Empire.

### 3. The Reforma at its Beginnings

Berninger identifies a liberal, structured, and early-scientific approach to immigration from 1855 to 1857.<sup>43</sup> Legislative milestones were set, priorities were reconsidered, and a more active role was taken by the government. The Ministerio de Fomento (Ministry of Development), which was also responsible for colonization, tackled under the direction of Manuel Siliceo the until then put aside process of analyzing what went wrong in previous colonization attempts. The lessons won from this process reflected in several projects, such as

<sup>37</sup> B. von BOGUSLAWSKI, 1851, *Ueber deutsche Colonisation in Mexico [...]* (Berlin: Hempel). Unfortunately, this book has not always been carefully considered by some scholars. BOPP (1979, pp. 482-483) fails to identify that it actually contains three segments by different authors. (1) In the *Vorwort*, written by the sponsoring society, migration into México is being discouraged based on the two thereby attached reports: (2) Boguslawski's contribution, pp. 1- 63, and (3), a report from Hugo Fink, pp. 63 -120.

<sup>38</sup> On this theme, see Walther L. BERNECKER, 1997, *Reiseberichte als historische Quellengattung für Mexiko im 19. Jahrhundert*, in: *Die Wiederentdeckung Lateinamerikas. Die Erfahrung des Subkontinents in Reiseberichten des 19. Jahrhunderts*, (ed.) Walther L. Bernecker und Gertrud Krömer (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert), pp. 325-352; VON MENTZ 1992; BERNINGER 1974, *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> BERNINGER 1974, pp. 143-144, 151, 153.

<sup>40</sup> CARRERA 1957, p. 601.

<sup>41</sup> BERNINGER 1974, pp. 157-158, 163-164.

<sup>42</sup> Under this term are usually meant only the Liberal governments of México emanated from the Revolución de Ayutla (1854-1855), which ended the dictatorship of Antonio López de Santa Ana.

<sup>43</sup> BERNINGER 1974, p. 167.

the development of a model colony close to the city of Papantla, in Veracruz, and the plan to establish various settlements in strategically defensive geographical points.<sup>44</sup> The interest in recruiting German settlers continued, but setting them in mixed colonies with people of other nationalities and with locals. New approaches were brought to the table: To hire colonization agents, to set colonists within already existing haciendas<sup>45</sup> and to recruit settlers from more diverse cultural groups, such as Italians and Africans.<sup>46</sup> But, according to Berninger, the period was too short to show tangible results and the violence and uncertainty arising from the *coup d'etat* in 1857 resulted in a lack of interest in foreign colonization.<sup>47</sup> He predicts any possible measurement undertaken as stillborns, and assures that all migration projects of a liberal tone were frozen until 1875. However, there are some indicators pointing to the need of further research and, eventually, to reconsider the parameters proposed by Berninger for this period.

First, even after 1857, the Republican government made attempts to attract both farmers and armed-migration.<sup>48</sup> This aspect has not been considered. And second, recent research has found that the Second Empire was not, as the pervasive textbook version prayed, a regime in which exclusively inept and greedy foreigners and senile Conservatives, who froze all liberal initiatives, participated. According to Konrad Ratz, Maximilian's regime was "nach heutigen Begriffen eine Koalitionsregierung,"<sup>49</sup> an affirmation which is also backed up by the results of other academic inquiries. For example, Erika Pani's analysis of the biographies of circa 100 first level Mexican staff members of the regime showing, first, the profile of well educated, experienced professional politicians and, second, a wider spectrum of political collaboration than until lately acknowledge.<sup>50</sup> As recent research shows, there are lines of continuity and change in some governmental policies and programs from the Reforma—in some cases even before—throughout the Second Empire. Just a few examples: Pani has studied the confirmation and application of the Ley Lerdo during the Second

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>45</sup> Large farms, ranches or plantations.

<sup>46</sup> BERNINGER 1974, pp. 175-177.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 167.

<sup>48</sup> Decree of Mar. 13, 1861, issued by Benito Juárez, in: Manuel DUBLÁN y José María LOZANO, 1876, *Legislación Mexicana o Colección completa de las disposiciones legislativas expedidas desde la Independencia de la República, Edición Oficial*, vol. 9 (México: Imprenta del Comercio), pp. 113-119. As Pani has pointed out, this collection of laws has unfortunately left out those issued by Maximilian's regime, see Erika PANI, 2001a, El "llamado imperio": la construcción historiográfica de un episodio de la memoria nacional, *Secuencia*, no. 49, pp. 88-105, here p. 89. See also HANNA and HANNA, 1971, p. 239.

<sup>49</sup> Konrad RATZ, 1998, *Maximilian und Juárez*, vol. 1 (Graz: ADEVA), p. 219.

<sup>50</sup> For an analysis about the qualifications and ideology of the Mexican members of the Second Empire's cabinet, see, Erika PANI, 2000, Un grupo de la elite política decimonónica: los imperialistas, *Secuencia*, no. 46, pp. 37-50.

Empire,<sup>51</sup> Patricia Galeana de Valadés has concluded that the Empire followed a liberal policy in regards to the Catholic Church,<sup>52</sup> Silvia Arrom has considered the governmental course of action regarding México City's indigent population,<sup>53</sup> while Maximilian's Indigenist policy has been analyzed within a wider time frame from the Colony to the Mexican Revolution (1910).<sup>54</sup>

There is one more aspect which has been overlooked by researchers when analyzing migration around the middle of the nineteenth century: The fact that three important staff members of the Ministry of Fomento from previous administrations—Manuel Orozco y Berra, Manuel Siliceo y Felipe Velázquez de León—also served in prominent cabinet positions during the Second Empire. This makes the question of whether some aspects of colonization policy show continuity under the Republican and Monarchist regimes even more promising.

### C. The French Intervention and the Second Mexican Empire

After a national polarization around the Constitution of 1857, the subsequent coup d'état and the following Guerra de Reforma (1857-1860), the Republican government of México was bankrupt and suspended payments of debts to all foreign powers on July 17, 1861. Between December 1861 and March 1862 Spanish, British and French fleets and troops arrived to México's seaports. The representatives of the first two countries left in April, but the French invaded and occupied the country. Republican President Benito Juárez abandoned México City on May 31, and a Superior Junta was installed by the French Interventionists.<sup>55</sup> On July 10, 1862, the Junta proclaimed a Catholic Empire in México, offering the crown and title of Emperor to Archduke Maximilian, younger brother of Franz Joseph, the Emperor of Austria.

As early as 1862, during the preparatory phase of the Second Mexican Empire,<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Law issued in 1856 abolishing clerical and communal properties. See Erica PANI 2001b, *Para mexicanizar el Segundo Imperio: el imaginario político de los imperialistas* (México: COLMEX), esp. pp. 293-306.

<sup>52</sup> Patricia GALEANA de VALADÉS, 1991, *Las relaciones iglesia-estado durante el Segundo Imperio* (México: UNAM).

<sup>53</sup> Silvia Marina ARROM, 2000, *Containing the Poor. The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871* (Durham: Duke University Press).

<sup>54</sup> See PANI 2004, p. 120, esp. 52n

<sup>55</sup> Perhaps Jean-François Lecaillon has better summarized the ideology behind the French Intervention in México: "Légende de l'El Dorado, phantasme de la menace extérieure, mythe du Progrès, l'intervention française a favorisé l'expression de véritables lubies collectives ... La France de Napoléon III au Mexique ne fit jamais qu'entretenir les phantasmes propres à la modernité positiviste, lesquels l'aveuglèrent jusqu'au fiasco final." See: Jean-François LECAILLON, 1990, *Mythes et phantasmes au coeur de l'intervention française au Mexique (1862-1867)*, in *Cahiers des Amériques Latines*, pp. 69-79, here p. 77.

<sup>56</sup> The Second Empire was traditionally understood as going from May 20, 1864 until May 15, 1867, overlooking its preparatory stage (Apr. 1862-June 1863) and separating the Regency from it (June 1863-1864).

important state matters were discussed and programs began to be delineated. México's foreign immigration and colonization policy became a priority because, according to the leading ideologists behind the Intervention,<sup>57</sup> France's economical, political and cultural interests in the Mexican expedition depended upon the accomplishment of two goals: First, in regards to foreign policy, recognition and an agreement with the United States must be reached. And second, at the domestic level, the "regeneration" of México must be achieved, which required attracting 500,000 European immigrants of Latin descent within a period of four years.<sup>58</sup> What apparently these plans seemed to have overlooked was the need to pacify the country. The Republicans had control of a good part of the territory and constantly attacked diverse locations, plus there were indigenous uprisings in different Mexican states, so that the country was still in the midst of a civil war.

As mentioned, a systematic analysis of the Second Empire's efforts to gain immigrants has not been done. What is known at this point about it? In general, Maximilian's colonization policy has been portrayed as a huge failure. We have been told that "wie in allem, was er während seiner Regierung in Angriff nahm, stand auch hier Klarheit, Bedacht und Festigkeit in Entwurf und Ausführung in einem starken Missverhältnis zu der Vortrefflichkeit seiner Absichten."<sup>59</sup> The Empire is said to have attracted only "adventurers," who rapaciously wanted to make some quick money and run.<sup>60</sup> Another predictable quote—usually serving as introduction to a list of failures—is attributed to Emmanuel Domenech, clergyman and *press attaché* of the French Interventionists. By approaching Félix Eloin—Chief of Maximilian's Civil Cabinet—with an immigration proposal in January 1865, Eloin should have declined it by saying "Le gouvernement n'a pas un pouce de terrain à

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Recent research has found enough evidence to establish a continuum. See LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 47 ff.

<sup>57</sup> See for example Michel CHEVALIER, 1864, *Le Mexique ancien et moderne* (Paris: Hachette), esp. pp. 450-471, where Chevalier, Napoleon III's spokesman, presents his points of view about the structure and characteristics of the Mexican population. He comes to the conclusion that it is in complete decadence and in urgent need to be "rescued" by the all benevolent and illustrious France. European migration into the United States is proposed as a model of reference, but should be restricted to Catholic Latin people. For a well documented analysis of how the factor of race conditioned the minds and guided the actions of the Interventionists, see Nancy N. BARKER, 1979, The Factor of "Race" in the French Experience in Mexico, 1821-1861, *HAHR*, no. 59:1, pp. 64-80.

<sup>58</sup> HANNA and HANNA 1947, p. 227. These same authors give the number of 600,000 immigrants in five years, Cf. HANNA und HANNA 1971, p. 199. For a bibliography about this policy, see *Ibidem*, p. 221, 6n.

<sup>59</sup> RATZEL 1969, p. 376; cf. PFEDERKAMP 1958, p. 179; BOPP 1965, p. 260 and *passim*; BOPP 1979, pp. 484-485; GONZÁLEZ NAVARRO 1993, pp. 501, 517 and *passim*.

<sup>60</sup> Even though the reasons for migrating were various, such as wanting to invest or work in different industries and projects, initiate a business, or finding a job in the new administration, the theme that comes across as pervasive in the literature is that of the immigrants as "adventurers." Cf. Francisco de Paula de ARRANGOIZ, 1974 [Madrid, 1871], *México desde 1808 hasta 1867* (México: Porrúa), pp. 590, 618, 641, 668, 714; BOPP 1965, pp. 261, 275 and *passim*; BOPP 1979, p. 483; Friedrich GERSTÄCKER, n.a. [1868], *Neue Reisen durch die Vereinigten Staaten, Mexiko, Ecuador, West Indien und Venezuela* (Berlin: von Neufeld & Henius), p. 320; PFERDEKAMPF 1958, p. 7; RATZEL 1969, pp. 371, 379.



donner à l'émigration, aussi nous n'en voulons pas."<sup>61</sup> But there are two problems with the way this quote has been reproduced: It has been brought down to a two-liner and the context has been taken away. To start with, Domenech believed that México immediately needed colonists who were

... décidés qui s'implantent sur un sol inculte, le cultivent sans s'inquiéter s'il y dans le monde un propriétaire problématique, et se défendent le revolver au poing, le rifle sur l'épaule contre tout individu qui viendrait lui disputer le fruit de son travail et la légitimité de ses droits.<sup>62</sup>

Domenech thought that the Empire should follow the North American frontier-style colonization—where the settlers just took over any vacant land they wished and defended it at shotgun point—and wished for Maximilian to apply a heavy taxation and/or an expropriation of all uncultivated lands right away, arguing that "tout ceux qui connaissent bien le Mexique et son histoire savent que les deux tiers des propriétaires ruraux n'ont aucun titre légal pour justifier la légitimation de leurs possessions."<sup>63</sup> He was at that time, in 1865, irritated by the regime's intention to allow a time limit to dictate legislation, conduct surveys and clear titles in an attempt to respect the property of both landowners and indigenous communities. However, he reports that by 1866 the situation has changed, and that the immigration program is moving forward.<sup>64</sup> The hereby exposed facts have been overlooked by other researchers.

Emmanuel Masseras—the editor of the pro-Imperialist newspaper *L'Ere nouvelle* (México City) and a counselor in colonization matters to the Second Empire representing France's interests, as per his own declarations—is another popular source for quoting. In one of his works attempting to justify the failure of the French Intervention in México, he wrote that there was disorganization around the colonization efforts, to the point that "les quelques immigrants qu'attirera cet appel ne trouveront pas un arpent de terrain prêt à les recevoir."<sup>65</sup> But by quoting him, it appears that what he was originally alleging in reference to the case of the North American Confederate refugees—whose immigration into México he actively supported—was later stretched out as a generalization.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Emmanuel DOMENECH, 1867, *Le Mexique tel qu'il est* (Paris: Dentu), p. 255.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 258. See also pp. 15-16.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 260. See also pp. 258-259.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 263.

<sup>65</sup> E[manuel] MASSERAS, 1879, *Un essai d' Empire au Mexique* (Paris: Charpentier), p. 416.

<sup>66</sup> His writings in *L'Ere nouvelle* and support of the Confederate migration have not been analyzed. See for example: Junta de colonización, *Diario del Imperio* (hereafter cited as *DI*), Sept. 12, 1865. The Confederate

According to the refrain-like official selection of México's national history not only the foreigners but even the Monarchists, who had offered the crown to Maximilian, were utterly disappointed about Maximilian's efforts to attract settlers. The Emperor had allegedly recognized the importance of foreign immigration, but, it has been written over and over, "in no other matter has more non-sense being carried out as in the colonization projects."<sup>67</sup> The measurements taken were supposed to show "great ignorance of México's history."<sup>68</sup> However, a careful read brings to light the possible reasons the author of those comments, who is so often quoted, could have had for disapproving the Empire's immigration policy: Francisco de Paula de Arrangoiz, like many Conservatives, disliked it that non-Catholics, non-Latin, and "even" Protestants were being considered for some projects.<sup>69</sup>

As shown, part of the allegations used for discrediting altogether the colonization program of the Empire are most probably based on biased impressions from articulated participants; some concerns might have been distorted into blame, while some positive aspects of the colonization program appear to have been selectively left out. The authors' intentions behind those disfavours could have been to exonerate themselves from the failure of the Second Mexican Empire or perhaps to discredit and belittle its projects, given that they did not suit their expectations. How to explain, then, that this narrative has been taken at face value by so many writers and has been reproduced for over more than a century? Perhaps many simply went along with the pervasive Republican "official version"<sup>70</sup> of the disparaged "so-called Empire," disregarding a critical evaluation and doing without additional sources. These presumptions became some sort of a providential truth, which inhibited further critical thought and original research for more than a century. It wasn't until recently that a few works have begun to question the tailored version of the Empire's development policies, providing interesting points of departure for new reflections. For example, based mostly on primary sources, Robert Duncan has studied the implementation of infrastructure in that period,<sup>71</sup> while Pani analyzed the ideology behind agricultural matters and land distribution.<sup>72</sup>

The goal of this subsection, thus, is to inquire into some of the main aspects of the

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refugees started to cross into México even before the fall of Richmond, Virginia in 1865. After the official end of the American Civil War, thousands of people emigrated every month.

<sup>67</sup> ARRANGOIZ 1974, pp. 618-619, 628; cf. RATZEL 1969, p. 376. This quote has been also attributed to Domenech, sometimes without a proper bibliographic citation.

<sup>68</sup> ARRANGOIZ 1974, pp. 629 ff.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 556-557, 619.

<sup>70</sup> Expression used by Pani to identify the patriotic myth built around the triumph of Juárez. See: PANI 2001a; PANI 2004.

<sup>71</sup> Robert DUNCAN, 2005, *Maximilian and Mexico's First Steps toward the Global Marketplace (1864-1866)*, <http://www.economia.unam.mx/amhe/memoria/simposio21/Robert%20DUNCAN.pdf>, (accessed June 6, 2007).

<sup>72</sup> PANI 2001b, pp. 270-310.

Second Empire's immigration policy in so far it is necessary to be able to identify the context in which the Villa Carlota program took shape.

### 1. Fomento: The Parts and the Whole

México probably had in 1864 around 8.3 million inhabitants. The majority were indígenas (54%), followed by mestizos (30%) and whites (15%), with only a small number of blacks (1%).<sup>73</sup> Counting with an area of almost two million square kilometers, only an estimated 10% of the population resided in the cities, meaning that the majority lived in rural areas and some zones were not inhabited at all. As already mentioned México was in urgent need of being pacified and needed to increase its productivity. The Imperial government's goal was to develop México by improving communications, promoting the exploitation of natural resources, modernizing agricultural techniques, and attracting immigration.<sup>74</sup> A railroad, a telegraph system, road construction, improvements of seaport facilities, hydraulic projects, banks and insurance companies were initiated.<sup>75</sup> Impulse was given to education in agrarian matters, backed up by reports geared toward boosting agricultural productivity.<sup>76</sup> At national and regional levels teams of cartographers, geologists, engineers and other scientists were in charge of locating and evaluating the *terrenos baldíos*<sup>77</sup> of the country, developing studies and creating a data base which should result in making property available for redistribution, that is, for colonization.

Colonization was assigned to the Ministry of Fomento, which was also responsible for public works, industry and commerce. The organization given to this ministry and the grouping of the areas of responsibility shows, first, that the interconnection of these programs was identified by the regime and, second, that there was an attempt to execute an integral developmental policy.

One of the points of convergence between the Second Empire and the Mexican elite's imagery was to idealize colonization as the magic potion to overcome the "Mexican problem." From the beginning, there was an attempt to identify the Emperor as the leader who will, finally, bring immigrants, civilization and progress to the country, as it can be seen

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<sup>73</sup> RATZ 1998, p. 232.

<sup>74</sup> PANI 2001b, pp. 271-272. This idea was reinforced in the contemporary political speech after the arrival in 1864 of the Scientific Commission to México, sent by Napoleon III, to "regenerate" and "civilize" México through science. José Salazar Ilarregui, future leader by the foundation of Villa Carlota, was one of the commission's major supporters. See: Paul N. EDISON, 2003, *Conquest Unrequited: French Expeditionary Science in Mexico, 1864-1867*, *French Historical Studies*, no. 26:3, pp. 459-495; LUBIENSKI 1988, p. 78.

<sup>75</sup> LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 85.

<sup>76</sup> The *Diario del Imperio*, for example, included almost in every issue such contributions.

<sup>77</sup> Lands of the national domain, for which there was no inventory.

in the following verse of an anonymous hymn to Maximilian:

Inmigrando colonos de Europa  
Llenarán los desiertos floridos  
Y sus frutos que estaban perdidos  
Pueblos cien ya podrán sustentar.<sup>78</sup>

Additionally, by pondering the budget allocated to these efforts their importance becomes clear: In his presentation to Maximilian of the 1866 budget, the General Inspector of Finances, A. de Maintenat, emphasized the importance of colonization, justifying the assignment of 1,958,200.00 *piastres* as a wise investment in the future of the country.<sup>79</sup>

When considering the objectives of the agrarian and social measurements initiated by Maximilian, it is possible to see a connection between the developmental, colonization and Indigenist policies of the Empire. Even if some colonization projects were only for foreigners, there were others mixing them with Mexican citizens. An aspect little known is that Maximilian considered that to assign properties to the *indígenas* was basic for improving their social condition and restoring their dignity.<sup>80</sup> The Junta Protectora de las Clases Menesterosas (Commission for Protection of the Underprivileged) championed giving back to the *indígenas* tracts which were irregularly taken away from them, running against great opposition.<sup>81</sup> Also related to these matters are the efforts to provide lands to the impoverished *indígenas* living in the cities, problematic which, according to Ratz, Maximilian was able to recognize as *Arbeitslosigkeit* and attempted to remedy by giving them access to education, property and equal rights as citizens.<sup>82</sup> But these goals were far too liberal for many. Among the groups resisting the most were the *terratenientes*, many of whom had problems providing proof of ownership on large extensions of their estates and who refused to give up some of their privileges.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Cited in: BOPP 1965, p. 258, [T: The desserts will blossom thanks to the work of the European immigrants he will bring. As a result, the previously unproductive fields will produce such an abundant harvest, that a population a hundred times bigger could be supported].

<sup>79</sup> Rapport de l' Inspecteur Général des Finances, A. de Maintenat, to S.A. Majesté L'Empereur sur le Budget 1866, Mexico, Mar. 26, 1866, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Abteilung Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Archiv seiner Majestät des Kaisers Maximilian I. von Mexiko (hereafter cited as ÖSt, KMM), K. 32. fol. 211v- 213v. A piastre was circa one peso, and a peso was more or less one dollar.

<sup>80</sup> DOMENECH 1867, pp. 111, 263.

<sup>81</sup> This commission represented the interests of poor people, in those days mostly composed by *indígenas*. See Jean MEYER, 1999, La Junta Protectora de las Clases Menesterosas. Indigenismo y agrarismo en el Segundo Imperio, in: *Indio, nación y comunidad en el México del siglo XIX*, (coord.) Antonio Escobar Ohmstede, (México: CIESAS), pp. 329-364.

<sup>82</sup> RATZ 1989, p. 235.

<sup>83</sup> HANNA und HANNA 1971, pp. 206-208.

## 2. Colonization during the Second Empire, Briefly Revisited

Probably there are three reasons why the Villa Carlota project was until now not accounted for. First, its timing, meaning that it actually began in 1864, before the organization, legislation, measurements and programs of the Empire were in detail made public at national level. Second, the fact that José Salazar Ilarregui, Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán was in charge of it, and not the Minister of Fomento, as several official documents show.<sup>84</sup> And third, that its scenario, Yucatán, was those days by many considered as remote, isolated and irrelevant.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to look at Villa Carlota itself as somehow separate from, although not unrelated to, the national and international happenings. This last aspect is in the following addressed, while the specifics of Villa Carlota are dealt with in Chapter IV.

"No efforts have been spared to promote foreign migration into México, to make sure that [the immigrants] would find here the necessary conditions and support to settle,"<sup>86</sup> claimed the Minister of Fomento already in 1865. "Les projets ... de colonisation ... se multipliaient avec un élan qui tenait de la fièvre," wrote Masseras. But what certain writers interpreted as chaos was perhaps just vigorous activity. The importance and urgency to attract a large number of foreigners not only demanded much coordination and a large budget, but also brought with itself an open discussion of the different criteria for selection of the immigrants, the evaluation of diverse colonization strategies and policies, the need for redefining administrative competences and for the development of legislation.

Also to consider is that there were different interests at play and some were favored at one point only to be criticized at another. The Interventionist agenda called for "selected" European immigrants,<sup>87</sup> goal to which apparently Empress Charlotte was also committed, as it is possible to deduct from statements in which she proclaimed that "the way to order, progress, and the true and brilliant future ... [of México was] ... *European immigration*,"<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup>As it was acknowledged, for example in: Luis ROBLES PEZUELA, 1866, *Memoria presentada a S.M. el Emperador, por el Ministro de Fomento Luis Robles Pezuela de los trabajos ejecutados en su ramo en el año 1865* (México: Andrade y Escalante), p. 106.

<sup>85</sup>Being difficult to reach by land, Yucatán was in those days through the ports of Sisal and Campeche more connected culturally and business wise to Veracruz and Cuba than to México City. As an example: Before the installation of the telegraph in 1865, it took 10 to 12 days for documents to get from México to Mérida. The peninsula had no industry, there were a few rich hacendados and businessmen, and the large majority of the population was poor. See Juan Francisco MOLINA SOLIS, 1921, *Historia de Yucatán desde la Independencia de España hasta la época actual*, vol. 2 (Mérida: Compañía Tipográfica Yucateca), pp. 430-431.

<sup>86</sup>Colonización, printed in full in *DI*, Apr. 24, 1865.

<sup>87</sup>HANNA and HANNA 1971, p. 67.

<sup>88</sup>Charlotte to Empress Eugénie, Feb. 3, 1865, printed in full by Egon Caesar CORTI, 1928 [1924], *Maximilian and Charlotte of Mexico*, vol. 2 (New York: Knopf), p. 879, emphasis in original. After a detailed analysis of the correspondence between Maximilian and Charlotte, Ratz has suggested that while the Emperor believed that

went on to favor selected migration affirming that "une émigration composée d'indigents ou d'hommes tarés serait dangereuse,"<sup>89</sup> and considered urgent to win white population "which shall absorb the old one, for there is nothing to be done with the [Mexican] existing elements."<sup>90</sup> This position—rejecting Protestants, non-Latin and poor immigrants—also had its own contradictions in practice, as the acceptance of thousands of Confederate refugees showed. Some members of the Mexican elite also subscribed to the ideal of selective migration, apparently without questioning whether it was realistic at all to attract immigrants with the desired characteristics: Catholic, Latin, middle class, educated, but willing to personally cultivate remote tracts. Actually, one can see here the same inconsistencies which have prevailed prior to the Empire. Having different needs, the terratenientes and entrepreneurs needed manpower, calling preferably for Indo-Asian laborers and rejecting Africans; on their part, the Liberals thought that anyone who could contribute to the development of the country should be admitted; all that while Maximilian dictated laws protecting the indígenas and the poor, insisted on creating mixed colonies, considered appropriate the immigration of Africans and Asians, and granted concessions plus resources to the settlement of Confederates. It is understandable that a polemic would arise. In synthesis, every interest group had a different profile of the desired immigrant, but almost all potential immigrant groups were outspokenly objected to by someone: "Anglo-Saxons were heretics; Poles were unreliable; Germans were not pure Catholics, drank beer, and smoked pipes; the French were too radical; the Southerners were rebels."<sup>91</sup> The Second Empire apparently attempted to conciliate and prioritize these so dissimilar agendas.

Also common place is to assume that the Empire's attempts to attract immigrants started with the establishment of the Junta de Colonización (Commission of Colonization), on March, 1865, assuming that nothing happened before that. As a result, prior developments have been overlooked by several researchers.

The obstacles heretofore listed have given way to portraying the Second Empire's immigration efforts as thoughtless, disorganized, unrealistic, or from the start condemned to doom. However, a closer and critical look at the existing data seems to indicate that in spite

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the mestizos and indígenas must be given equal rights and opportunities, Charlotte saw the future of México as depending upon European and North American immigrants. See: RATZ 1998, p. 339. Judging by Charlotte, "die Zivilisation muß man importieren ... Man braucht Eisenbahnen und Einwanderung," *ibidem*, p. 336. See also Luis WECKMANN, 1989, *Carlota de Bélgica. Correspondencia y escritos sobre México en los archivos europeos, 1861-1868* (México: Porrúa), p. 294.

<sup>89</sup> Charlotte, Conversation avec M. Maury, June 28, 1865, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989, p. 172.

<sup>90</sup> Charlotte to Eugénie, Chapultepec, Feb. 3, 1865, printed in full by CORTI 1928, p. 879.

<sup>91</sup> *L'Estafette*, June 22, 1865, cited in HANNA und HANNA 1947, p. 235.

of its shortcomings and controversies—which actually all radical policy brings with itself—the colonization program of the Empire was more organized, liberal and complex than it has been perceived, and that some of the projects, even if short lived, actually took form. The facts have just not been analyzed.

#### **a. Organization, Legislation and other Measurements**

Maximilian created in the *Estatuto Provisional del Imperio Mexicano*,<sup>92</sup> in April 1865, a five level organization for administering the Empire. Relevant for this thesis at this point is that the Imperial Commissioners, who represented the Emperor in a specific territorial division, reported directly to the Emperor, just like the Ministers and the members of special advisory boards,<sup>93</sup> (see Appendix B). At national level, two committees related to immigration matters were created in March, 1865: The already mentioned Junta de Colonización, and the Junta de Inspección de Tierras (Land Inspection Commission), this last one in charge of clearing land titles and surveying tracts and properties. The first working group, formed by 12 people, included Mexicans and foreigners and its assignment was to propose colonization projects to the Emperor, how to regulate them, and suggest where to locate them.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, there were regional and sectional sub-commissions in the different departments and major cities, with similar local jurisdiction. One of the results of the activities of this Junta de Colonización was the Imperial Decree published on September 5, 1865—passed by the end of the month into the Colonization Law—in which, among others, México declared itself open to colonization from peoples of all nations.<sup>95</sup>

At the same time that the Empire was creating an administrative and legal frame for colonization, it implemented measurements and strategies to make land available for the settlers. Surveying and testing of the terrenos baldíos began, but allowing certain time frames to clarify disputes, and assigning legal representatives to the indígenas who had

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<sup>92</sup> Provisory legislation defining the organization of the Empire. For a description refer to LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 80-86.

<sup>93</sup> According to the territorial division designed by Manuel Orozco y Berra and its corresponding Decree of Mar. 3, 1866, México was organized in eight territorial divisions, or *Comisariados*. The Imperial Commissioners represented politically the Emperor in their corresponding territory in all matters. Their responsibilities were clearly regulated. See LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 87-88.

<sup>94</sup> Decree published in the *Periódico oficial del Departamento de Yucatán* (hereafter cited as *PoDY*), Apr. 26, 1865. See also LUBIENSKI 1988, p. 97.

<sup>95</sup> LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 97-99. The complete Colonization Law was passed on Sept. 27 of the same year, and was published in Mérida in: *PoDY*, Sept. 29, 1865. Great controversy was created around this law. Apparently, the North American government interpreted it as the reestablishment of slavery in México, while belittling the Ley del Peonaje, which was to regulate the labor conditions of all workers, issued that same year. It would probably be worthwhile to take another look at it in the context of a larger analysis.

territorial claims. An attempt was also made to motivate landowners to lease or sell part of their estates to colonizers by offering incentives and by taxation on all uncultivated land.<sup>96</sup> At district level, the Imperial Commissioner and the Prefecto Político (Political Prefect) made efforts to persuade the *hacendados* to cooperate.<sup>97</sup>

Another front covered by the Empire was to set immigration at the top of the media agenda. Although the official *Diario del Imperio* (México City) became an open vehicle to sell the Interventionist ideas, apparently there were enough other neutral and opposition newspapers to carry out a public discussion in the capital.<sup>98</sup>

### **b. Strategies to Attract Immigration**

How did the Empire attempt to attract immigrants? I propose that it followed four strategies: Promoting individual migration, granting concessions to particulars, facilitating group migration and organizing State-financed colonies.

Individual migration went to México drawn by Maximilian's Empire, meaning not only military officers and diplomats, but also nobles, scientists, business people and job-seekers. These were mostly Germans, Austrians, British, Polish, Swiss and French. It has been suggested that, even though short-lived, the so long wished-for migration to México was perhaps initiated, at minimum inspired, by Maximilian's regime.<sup>99</sup>

The majority of the concessions—some to introduce workers, other to found farming colonies—were requested by independent agents, most of them private entrepreneurs.<sup>100</sup> Reading the published accounts of these offers, they come across as a dazzling account of isolated, extravagant and ill-fated attempts. Thus, it is hereby proposed to distinguish between those requests granted, those declined and the ones whose outcome is unknown, differentiation which until now has not been done. Granted were concessions to bring, among others, Polish, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Hindu colonists and/or workers.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>96</sup> One of the most complete programs was printed in: Parte Oficial, *DI*, Jan. 12, 1865.

<sup>97</sup> The Prefecto(s) Político de Departamento (Political Prefects) were functionaries heading the *Prefecturas* (Districts, or Prefectures), located on the second level of administration, as shown in Appendix B. According to the organization of the Empire, each *Comisariado* was to have between four to eight *Prefecturas*, adding up to 50 in the country. For a description of their areas of competence, see: LUBIENSKI 1988, p. 89.

<sup>98</sup> HANNA and HANNA (1941, p. 224) have concluded that during the Second Empire freedom of press was allowed to a considerable extent.

<sup>99</sup> BOPP 1965, p. 265.

<sup>100</sup> Suggestions directly pitched to Maximilian appear to have been forwarded to the corresponding ministry. I have found information about dozens of proposals in Mexican, Yucatecan and European archives.

<sup>101</sup> The concessions were granted to the Ritter von Borvens for German and Polish citizens, to Numa Dousdebés for French and Spanish, and to Manuel de Cunha Reis for the last two cultural groups. See BOPP 1965, p. 262; BOPP 1979, p. 485; GONZÁLEZ NAVARRO 1993, vol. 1, pp. 511-512; LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 96, 98.



Especially the immigration of Africans and Chinese created great controversy about the "races" and its characteristics among the elite.<sup>102</sup> After heavy discussions, both in official working sessions and through newspaper editorials, only a few of those plans were accepted, while most others were denied. At least one project, the one from the former North American Senator William M. Gwin to colonize the state of Sonora, was refused for being considered menacing to México's integrity; notwithstanding the pressure from France, Austria and Belgium, who supported the plan.<sup>103</sup> But numerous schemes were not more than a letter, a pamphlet, an inquiry or a request. Nevertheless, they have been in several cases used to argue the inefficiency of the Empire's immigration policy, without consulting one single archive and overlooking that in reality many were only that: Offers for consideration.

The State also facilitated migration for certain groups to found settlements. Some of them have not been studied at all, such as the French settlements in Zongolica, the military colonies with former European soldiers founded in several Mexican estates,<sup>104</sup> and a colony of Swiss civilians which settled during the Regency in the state of Oaxaca, and whose rights were allegedly withdrawn by the Republican government after the collapse of the Second Empire.<sup>105</sup> The controversial settlements of North American refugees in México have received much attention, especially the Carlota Colony, which was located nine miles southeast from Córdoba.<sup>106</sup> It was one of the thirteen Confederate colonies created in several states under the term of the Imperial Commissioner for Colonization Matthew Fontaine Maury.<sup>107</sup> In this case, the Empire was to provide special incentives and support to the colonizers based on several distinctions.<sup>108</sup>

Finally, there was fully assisted migration, even though it was probably not intended as such at the beginning. That will be the case of the German colonies in Yucatán, whose details will be presented in Chapter IV.

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<sup>102</sup> Colonización, *DI*, June 10, 1865; Decreto, *ibidem*, Sept. 15, 1866.

<sup>103</sup> See Ana Rosa SUÁREZ ARGÜELLO, 1990, *Un duque Norteamericano para Sonora* (México: CONACULTA).

<sup>104</sup> Sesión del Consejo de Ministros, May 17 and 19, as well as June 6 and 25, 1866, ÖSt, KMM, K. 28.

<sup>105</sup> BOPP 1979, p. 485.

<sup>106</sup> See Harry Thayer MAHONEY and Majorie Locke MAHONEY, 1998, *Mexico and the Confederacy. 1860-1867* (San Francisco: Austin & Winfield); Carl Coke RISTER, 1945, Carlota: A Confederate Colony in Mexico, *Journal of Southern History*, no. 11, pp. 33-50; HANNA and HANNA 1971.

<sup>107</sup> MAHONEY and MAHONEY 1998, p. 177. Commodore Matthew Maury Fontaine (b. Virginia, 1806; d. Lexington, 1873), was a meteorologist, oceanographer, Confederate States Navy Commander and member of several international scientific societies. He served the Second Mexican Empire from June 1865 to Apr. 1866.

<sup>108</sup> George HARMON, 1937, Confederate Migration to Mexico, *HAHR*, no. 17, pp. 458-487, here p. 480. See also Lawrence F. HILL, 1936, The Confederate Exodus to Latin America, part 3, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, no. 4, pp. 309-326.

### c. Ideal Immigrants, Ideal Colonies

After identifying some of the colonization projects of the Empire it is possible to ask: What was the colonization envisioned by the Second Empire like? Two tendencies are noticeable. The first one, towards a diversity of projects including peoples of several nationalities and religions: But, nevertheless, favoring Europeans over other groups and foreigners over locals. The second being that both farmers aspiring to be landowners as well as laborers were included, but apparently not as equals: Those receiving tracts were mostly Europeans and North Americans, while peoples of other ethnic groups, such as Asians and Africans, were considered as laborers. Three objectives seem to have been pursued: To create a middle class of farmers, something almost non-existent in México those days; to count on part of the immigrants as military resources for the Empire; and to make workers available at the time when manpower was crucial to help consolidate the economic structure of the state.

By considering the varieties of peoples and migration forms included in the program of the Second Empire, one aspect comes across clearly: That an immigration policy attempting to "whiten" México as championed by the French, meaning bringing in exclusively Caucasians in order to diminish the presence of the indígenas, was not carried out in practice by Maximilian. The Second Empire appeared more interested in a liberal policy attempting to respond to the demands of the various sectors of the Mexican society; a policy considered necessary for the development of a competitive, modern state, actually following more the North American model instead of the directives given by the French Interventionists. That it was an unpopular, ambitious, complex and expensive program, added to the short life of the Second Empire, explains its fate.

Nevertheless, it must be noticed that even if Maximilian did not agree with a "selective migration" policy, he seemed to have shared to some degree the French expansionist aspirations to create an Empire in Latin America. Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, had expressed his intentions prior to the London Convention, camouflaged in form of a "civilizing mission" discourse. Maximilian had envisioned extending his *Mexican Reich* to include all Central American countries and parts of South America, with Yucatán as the "new gravitational center of the Empire," as he worded it in the instructions he gave to Charlotte before her visit in 1865 to the peninsula.<sup>109</sup> As a way of gaining recognition from the United

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<sup>109</sup> Instrucciones secretas del Emperador á la Emperatriz para el viaje de Yucatán, printed in full by LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 149-155. Given that Brazil was also a Monarchy at that time, Maximilian's plan makes reference to a double Monarchy in Latin America: México and Brazil. See also LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 99-100; RATZ 1998, pp.

States, Maximilian was contemplating giving them some of the northern parts of the country, turning Yucatán into the capital of a new "central Empire" in America; therefore, the peninsula ought to get preferential attention, resources and impulse. And there, to Yucatán, is where he sent one of the Ministers he trusted the most as Imperial Commissioner: José Salazar Ilarregui,<sup>110</sup> who also happened to be interested in promoting foreign colonization.

By analyzing a group of documents it is possible to reconstruct that, already while serving as Minister of Fomento during the Regency, Salazar Ilarregui had started to study several colonization projects.<sup>111</sup> In July 1864, he presented to the Emperor an analysis of México's legislation and colonization projects from 1821 to 1864—information which appears to be largely based on the *Memoria* presented by Manuel Siliceo in 1857—along with a colonization project of his own. In Salazar Ilarregui's plan, many of the failures identified by Siliceo were being avoided right from the start. First, the location and testing of the land should be done by the government, and not outsourced to contractors. Second, the selection of the colonists should be done by an agent of the Empire, who would look after the regime's interests. Third, the settlement should be relatively close to a town and to a seaport for an easier transportation of products. Fourth: The immigrants, who should be Europeans willing to naturalize as Mexicans, would receive support from the moment of their arrival until their first harvest. And fifth, the foreigners should settle in areas where they would be in direct contact with the locals, so that an acculturation process could take place: Families were preferred, but singles should also be included, to whom special incentives could be offered so that they would marry Mexicans. Although no records of the Emperor's answer have been located, a few days after his presentation Salazar Ilarregui requested that the Prefecto Político de Mérida, Yucatán, submit to him as soon as possible an inventory of land available for colonization.<sup>112</sup> What made Maximilian and his Minister of Fomento think that it was feasible for México to attract European immigrants at that moment? Probably that the establishment

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340-341.

<sup>110</sup> José Salazar Ilarregui (b. Hermosillo, Sonora, 1823; d. México City, 1892), graduated as a mathematical engineer from the Colegio de Minería in México's capital. Among other commissions, he worked on the US-México boundary survey after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—where he apparently met Arthur Schott, see p. 42—and represented the state of Chihuahua in the Assembly of Notables. He served as Minister of Fomento from June 21, 1863 until June 12, 1864, when he was appointed Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán.

<sup>111</sup> Informe sobre la colonización y los terrenos vulgarmente llamados baldios desde el 27 de sept., 1821 hasta mayo 27, 1864, n. a. Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán (hereafter cited as CAIHY), XLV, 1864, 1/3, 009; Copia de las disposiciones dictadas sobre colonización e industria de México, desde 1821 hasta el presente, México City, July 12, 1864, *ibidem*, XLV, 1864, 1/3, 011; Salazar Ilarregui, México City, July 10, 1864, Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Segundo Imperio, (hereafter cited as AGN, FSS), vol. 29; The information about the *Memoria* written by Manuel Siliceo was taken from BERNINGER 1974, pp. 173-177.

<sup>112</sup> Salazar Ilarregui, Ministry of Fomento, to the Prefecto Político de Mérida, México, July 18, 1864, CAIHY, Fondo Reservado, fol. 27, s.n.

of a Monarchy under an Austrian Archduke created a sense of confidence in some people and governments: It was expected that the unstable and insecure situation of México was finally going to come to an end.<sup>113</sup> They were probably also influenced by the fact that, at least at the beginning, the Empire estimated it was in a position to finance some of the expenses necessary to promote immigration, which had not been the case in previous administrations.

How the Second Empire's colonization program was initiated in Yucatán will be analyzed in the following section.

#### **D. Laborers, Missionaries or Colonists? The Yucatecan Challenge**

Contrary to how things happened in other parts of México, in the state of Yucatán there was no French military invasion.<sup>114</sup> Actually, in December of 1863 Yucatán declared itself in favor of the Intervention and for the Monarchy.

Nevertheless, to think that the Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán was assigned to simply carry out the Emperor's instructions in a perhaps isolated and impoverished but friendly to the Monarchy region would be an oversimplification of the challenge involved. Even though the Yucatecan elite appeared to sympathize with the Monarchy, it was in reality against a centralization of the government. Yucatán's history of two previous separations from the Federation and its consequent re-incorporations, a history of unresolved rivalries with the neighboring state of Campeche, 23 changes of governors from 1857 until 1864: All showed a vacillating entity. Corruption, favoritism, influential Republican supporters in the neighboring states of Campeche and Tabasco, and the consequences of the Caste War, which translated into losses of close to half of the state's economical and human resources, made the situation delicate.<sup>115</sup>

Salazar Ilarregui took office as Imperial Commissioner on September 4, 1864. He arrived in Mérida with some of the members of his staff and a four page set of instructions issued by Maximilian, which are crucial for understanding what the expectations and actions

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<sup>113</sup> Cf. BERNECKER 1988, pp. 555-556. Although publicly pretending a neutral position, the General Consul of Prussia in México, Stephan von Benecke, should have "sang paeans of praise for the expected regeneration of México" by Emperor Maximilian. See Arnold BLUMBERG, 1987, *The Diplomacy of the Mexican Empire, 1863-1867* (Florida: Krieger), p. 53.

<sup>114</sup> The Yucatecan elite's sympathy for the Monarchy has been explained as the result of the complex intersection of political and economical factors. See CANTO MAYÉN 2006, *Los Partidarios del Proyecto Imperial en la Península de Yucatán: De la implantación monárquica a la última conciliación republicana, 1863-1898* (Thesis: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán), pp. 248-251. See also Fausto Manuel SANCHEZ NOVELO, 1983, *Yucatán durante la intervención francesa y el Imperio, 1863-1867* (Mérida: Maldonado).

<sup>115</sup> Sergio QUEZADA, 2001, *Breve Historia de Yucatán* (México: FCE), pp. 121-152; Yucatán's population plunged almost 50% from 504,635 inhabitants in 1846, to 256,381 in 1856.

of the Empire were in regards to colonization.<sup>116</sup> This document contains sixteen articles outlining general tasks and specific problems to attend to and the ways to go about achieving them. Several refer to colonization, sometimes intertwined with policies regarding the indígenas. In Instruction Three, Maximilian instructs Salazar Ilarregui to use initially peaceful methods in dealing with the *cruzoob*, to appease the animosity of the elite against all indigenous people, while protecting the Maya in general, "their culture and ways of life, so long they do not go against the moral, laws or religion", which shows the Emperor's interest in the indígenas.<sup>117</sup> In Instruction Five Maximilian recommends that his Commissioner carry out the colonization project—meaning Villa Carlota—"with much prudence, without setting at risk the independence of the Empire neither humiliating the Mexican in any way," which probably implies not accepting English-speaking peoples—because of fear of a possible affiliation with the British colony of Belize—and shows awareness that some locals felt intimidated by foreigners. The correct execution of this instruction, according to the Emperor, would put an end to the Caste War and to the illegal traffic of Maya to the Island of Cuba,<sup>118</sup> and solving those problems would have a positive repercussion in the peninsula's development. Maximilian refers in his Sixth Instruction to the selection of the tracts to be given to the colonists, by which the Commissioner is told to respect the property and interest of the hacendados, and to try to win their support for the colonization project. It is outlined in Instruction 12 that after balancing the state's budget, Salazar Ilarregui could dispose of the remnants as funds for colonization and public works. Finally, according to Instruction 14, the Imperial Commissioner is authorized to report directly to Maximilian and given *carte blanche* to proceed as necessary in urgent or special matters. This full discretionary power regarding the colonization of the peninsula is also confirmed by other documents.<sup>119</sup>

In these instructions it is revealing that Maximilian addressed the indigenous' problem—meaning the illegal traffic of Maya to Cuba, the *cruzoob* uprising and the aversion of the *yucatecos* toward the indígenas—as possible to be resolved by a combination of negotiations. But he also recognized that behind that problem there were claims and concessions long due to be made. Steps had to be taken to give the Maya their lands back, to

<sup>116</sup> Instrucciones á que se sujetará mi Comisario Imperial de la península de Yucatán Don José Salazar Ilarregui, Palacio de México, July 31, 1864, printed in full by LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 145-148.

<sup>117</sup> All Imperial Commissioners were instructed to protect the indígenas. Cf. LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 87-88.

<sup>118</sup> During the presidency of Santa Ana, thousands of Maya rebels were sold as "colonos"—in reality as indentured laborers—in the Island of Cuba which, still under Spanish Crown, did not abolish slavery until 1888. Although banned by President Juárez in 1860, the illegal traffic was allegedly still being carried out. About the selling of Maya, see Moisés GONZÁLEZ NAVARRO, 1979, *Raza y tierra. La Guerra de Castas y el henequen* (México: COLMEX), esp. pp. 108-168.

<sup>119</sup> For example in: Salazar Ilarregui to Maximilian, Mérida, Nov. 7, 1864, ÖSt, KMM, K. 18.

protect their work, and offer help to incorporate them into the society. It is possible to conclude that at this initial stage, the foreign colonists were assigned a civilizing and pacifying mission by the Second Empire, with emphasis on the first part of the formula. Although this liberal social ideology found some supporters in political circles in México City, could the same be expected from Yucatán?

### 1. Economical, Political and Social Context

Since Colonial times the members of the local elite, a group of less than 30 Hispanic families, had controlled the regional economy of Yucatán.<sup>120</sup> They owned large estates, controlled all-important factors of production and had the support of the military elites and the church authorities. After 1821, they went into the production of cotton, corn and sugarcane, which required larger tracts, ending up in the seizing of Maya communal lands, and a higher demand of local village labor. But the Maya preferred to continue to be *milperos*, that is independent corn farmers, using their traditional slash-and burn technology to grow produce basically for their subsistence and that of their families.<sup>121</sup> The hacendados forced intraregional migration: Some of the people who were left without land went to work on the sugarcane plantations, many of them ending up as *peones encasillados*,<sup>122</sup> working under conditions little different from serfdom. The terratenientes also attempted to make *luneros* out of the independent Maya villagers, that is, to force them to work for them in exchange for the temporary usage of land and water without a cash payment. The *campesinos* resisted these measures as well as the excessive church contributions required of them: These would become some of the causes of the Caste War, which would dislocate Yucatecan economy and reduce dramatically the population of the peninsula.<sup>123</sup> The fighting between the crucoob and government forces disrupted plantations and trade, devastated parts of the fertile cane-growing districts and forced the landowners to look for alternative crops, while many Maya ran away from the towns seeking refuge in the forest, pretty much like the *cimarrones*, black slaves, did in Cuba. By the 1860's the planters-elite turned all efforts toward organizing and

<sup>120</sup> Allen WELLS, 1982, Family Elites in a Boom-and-Bust Economy: The Molinas and Peóns of Porfirian Yucatán, *HAHR*, no. 62:2, pp. 224-253, here p. 225.

<sup>121</sup> Robert PATCH, 1985, Agrarian Change in Eighteenth-Century Yucatán, *HAHR*, no. 65:1, pp. 19-49, here pp. 23, 26-27; WELLS 1982, pp. 228 ff.

<sup>122</sup> Permanent resident laborers, sometimes falling into debt peonage. For an analysis of the situation of the yucatecan workers, see Friedrich KATZ, 1974, Labor Conditions on Haciendas in Porfirian Mexico: Some Trends and Tendencies, *HAHR*, no. 54:1, pp. 1-47.

<sup>123</sup> Howard F. CLINE, 1948, The Henequen episode in Yucatan, 1830-1890, in *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, no. 2, pp. 30-51. See also GONZÁLEZ NAVARRO 1979; Gilbert M. JOSEPH, 1988, *Revolution from Without: Yucatán, México and the United States, 1880-1924* (Durham: Duke University Press), pp. 13-26.

extending the henequen plantations, as well as to cotton cultivation, for which a sudden opening of the market came about thanks to the American Civil War.<sup>124</sup> This new beginning for the Yucatecan economy brought up again the demands to acquire more land and better agricultural technology, create financing institutions, improve the infrastructure, and the need for more manpower. The elite alleged not having money to import workers, while portraying the indígenas as hinderers of modernization.<sup>125</sup>

The Caste War exacerbated a long history of racism and hatred against the Maya, who after 1847 were publicly labeled by the elites as the "enemies of civilization," threatened and harassed in different ways. According to the oligarchy, the *cruzoob*, in public discourse referred as *indios salvajes* or *indios bárbaros*, should be exterminated.<sup>126</sup> The peaceful Maya, the so called *indios pacíficos* needed to be "civilized," meaning to leave behind their culture and become *indios domésticos* working for the upper class Hispanics.

These were, thus, some of the challenges Salazar Ilarregui had to tackle in Yucatán.

## 2. The Quest for Progress and Modernity

As mentioned above, with the Imperial Commissioner arrived part of his staff. Among them was a group of engineers, part of the members of the Scientific Commission of Yucatán, which was to concentrate on public works. The commission worked quickly, brought more scientists from abroad, recruited locally other specialists and helpers, and became probably one of the most productive teams of the Empire in Yucatán.<sup>127</sup> Salazar Ilarregui also established in October 1864 the Banco de Avío, financial institution which granted loans to local small merchants, artisans and farmers.<sup>128</sup> The elite approved and benefited from these

<sup>124</sup> Terry RUGELEY, 1995, Experiencias de un oficial imperialista en el campo yucateco, *Suplemento Unicornio del Por Esto!*, no. 214, pp. 3-8, here p. 4.

<sup>125</sup> The theme "the Maya as obstructors of progress" has been studied by Alejandra GARCÍA QUINTANILLA, 1990, Hacia una nueva agricultura: Yucatán a mediados del siglo diecinueve, in: *Sociedad, estructura agraria y estado en Yucatán*, (ed.) Othón Baños Ramírez (Mérida: UADY), pp. 133-165.

<sup>126</sup> [T: savages, wild or barbarian Indians]. The public demonization of the Maya by the elite has been analyzed by John F. CHUCHIAK, 1997, Intellectuals, Indians and the Press. Polemical Journalism of Justo Sierra O'Reilly, *Saastún, Maya Culture Review*, no. 2, pp. 3- 50. In the Yucatecan press during the Second Empire, some editorials and many public letters with an inflammatory rhetoric against the indígenas were published. Advertising of properties for sale sometimes mentioned "indios" as included in the deal, and classified ads offering a reward for turning in "indios" who had run away from their "owners" were regularly published. See for example *PoDY* 1864-1866.

<sup>127</sup> This was a team of around 20 people. They did the nomenclature and leveled the streets of Mérida, installed artesian wells, coordinated the installation of the first telegraphic line in the state, worked in road construction, collaborated with the Junta de Tierras y Colonización of the state, mapped the coast of the peninsula, and collected mineral, botanical and animal samples. Their work was much praised during the Empire, afterwards forgotten, and until now remains unstudied.

<sup>128</sup> This institution was headed by the Imperial Commissioner and two prominent Yucatecan. See SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, p. 72.

policies of the Empire, but all these efforts to promote "civilization and progress" would be incomplete without putting an end to the Caste War. Apparently the war was the problem from which many others arose. Thinking that a non-aggressive approach to pacify the crucoob was unlikely to function, preparations were started to launch an attack against the rebels.<sup>129</sup> Agreements at military and administrative levels were reached but, according to the Imperial Commissioner, the Yucatecan elite although enthusiastic with the idea, was unwilling to cooperate to support the offensive and expected that the government would do everything for them; frustrated Salazar Ilarregui described the group as one "whose acts were dominated by egoism."<sup>130</sup> In later communications to Emperor Maximilian, the Imperial Commissioner continued to report apathy and lack of an effective cooperation of part of the oligarchy, some of whom he qualified as unreliable, two-faced and gossipmongers.<sup>131</sup>

Notwithstanding, the Commissioner attempted to implement the programs of the Empire, among them the one about colonization.

### 3. Foreign Colonization Unrequested?

Even if the yucatecos benefited from the Banco de Avío and welcomed the execution of public works, one can not assume that they had any interests in receiving, and less so financing, foreign colonists.

Long before the arrival of Salazar Ilarregui to the peninsula, a Yucatecan version of the "riqueza mexicana" myth was present in the print media and in official communications.<sup>132</sup> This image, created and spread by the elite and clearly reflected in several documents and publications, believed that Yucatán had the potential resources to become rich. There were only four obstacles to overcome: To finish the Caste War, to dictate laws which will favor the hacendados, to implement modern and scientific methods of

<sup>129</sup> Salazar Ilarregui sent a message in Maya and Spanish to the crucoob in Nov., 1864, and dispatched representatives to Chan Santa Cruz, the hub of the rebels, attempting to begin negotiations. The crucoob responded with more attacks. On Dec. 29, 1864, three members of the Imperial military cabinet arrived to Mérida to discuss military strategies against the crucoob. See REED 1964, p. 187.

<sup>130</sup> Salazar Ilarregui to Maximilian, Mérida, Jan. 2, 1865, ÖSt, KMM, K. 18.

<sup>131</sup> CANTO MAYÉN (2006) has suggested that the Yucatecan oligarchy attempted to boycott Salazar Ilarregui, given that they wanted, among other things, to have in that position one of their own, namely Pedro de Regil y Peón. Some of the documents until now consulted seems to support Canto Mayén's interpretation.

<sup>132</sup> Besides the contemporary newspapers, see: José García Morales, Mérida, Dec. 31, 1865, CAIHY, L-1865-3/4, 035. This document contains the answers given by the Prefecto Político de Yucatán to an official request for information about the conditions and potential of the state. Although this document has been interpreted by other researchers as a proof of the richness of Yucatán, I believe that taking additional data and recent research under consideration, it is more likely that it can be read as a reflection of the oligarchy's idealized image of Yucatán and its resources. For example, cf. Raquel BARCELÓ, 2005, *La búsqueda del confort y la higiene en Mérida, 1860-1911*, in: *Historia de la vida cotidiana en México*, vol. 4, *Bienes y vivencias, El siglo XIX*, (coord.) Anne Staples (México: COLMEX), pp. 213-251.



agriculture, and, to "civilize" the Maya. But the Yucatecan definition of entrepreneurs meant Yucatecan businessmen, not foreigners.

Prior to the Second Empire, Yucatán had not shown major interest in promoting foreign colonization beyond the issuing of the Law of Colonization in 1823 and its subsequent revisions.<sup>133</sup> The peninsula had remained relatively closed to foreigners, mostly due to the geographical, historical and social conditions of this remote area. To understand the challenge foreigners faced, it is necessary to ask first: Who was a Yucatecan? With its own separatist and until then recently independent story, Yucatán saw itself as a *país* (country) and not as a state. This issue is clearly reflected in contemporary newspapers, which define all those not born in the state of Yucatán as aliens. That means that the Mexicans and those coming from the neighboring states of Campeche and Tabasco were extrinsic. One more nuance to consider is that under the term "yucatecos" was basically understood accommodated Hispanics, members of the economic elite, living in the cities, who saw themselves as separated from, and superior to the poor urban mestizos and the rural population.

Regarding the word "colono," one of the major challenges of the Empire in Yucatán was to confer a new meaning on this term given that it had three different usages there at that time. The most common one, used in connection with *peones* or *operarios* (laborers), referred to the legally and illegally introduced black slaves,<sup>134</sup> as well as to a reduced number of "colonos," in reality indentured workers, brought to the peninsula from the most diverse countries, such as France and Spain.<sup>135</sup> This connotation was solidified after 1847, with the illegal traffic of Maya rebels sold to Cuba, which were referred to as "colonos." The second significance referred to the inhabitants of the military colonies in the towns close to the defense posts against the *cruzoob*, where people had to be self-reliant against attacks and, therefore, kept themselves on an "informal but very ready basis" half under arms at all times, run regular patrols, and function as a defense force.<sup>136</sup> The third denotation related to political prisoners in penitentiary colonies, such as the one in the Island of Cozumel.<sup>137</sup> For the Second

<sup>133</sup> BERNECKER 1989, pp. 45-46; GOBIERNO del Estado de Yucatán, *Colección de Leyes, Decretos y Ordenes del Augusto Congreso del Estado Libre de Yucatán*, vol. 1 (Mérida: v.a.), Ley de Colonización Yucateca, Sept. 6, 1823 (Mérida); *Ibidem*, vol. 2, Decreto no. 18, Oct. 20, 1827, p. 215; *ibidem*, vol. 2, Orden, Oct. 26, 1827, p. 222; *ibidem*, vol. 2, Decreto no. 35, Mar. 1, 1832, p. 510. It is important to bring up the issue that the Congress of the State of Yucatán does not include into its compilations the decrees issued during the Second Empire.

<sup>134</sup> VICTORIA OJEDA and CANTO ALCOCER 2006, pp. 14-15.

<sup>135</sup> GONZÁLEZ NAVARRO 1979, pp. 150-153 und *passim*.

<sup>136</sup> REED 1964, p. 188. Around Villa Carlota's time, the towns of Peto and Dzontchel were considered as military colonies. Please refer to Figure 1.

<sup>137</sup> See Konrad RATZ, 2000, „Vor Sehnsucht nach dir vergehend." *Der private Briefwechsel zwischen*

Empire's officials as well as for the German colonizers, the meaning was clearly that of "Der Bauer, sowohl auf eigenem wie auf fremden Feld,"<sup>138</sup> which implied taking possession of tracts. This last possibility, to give tracts to non-Yucatecan to exploit it independently, had to be first accepted by the elite, who were more interested in getting workers than in sharing their land at a time when they thought expansion was crucial. In other words, there was the need to convince the terratenientes that they would benefit from having colonizers, instead of laborers. The regime followed several strategies in an attempt to get the elite to cooperate: To bring many well-to-do yucatecos into the government, to grant public works contracts and concessions to local entrepreneurs, to socialize with the oligarchy and to make use of the official newspapers to win support for its projects.

### **a. Negotiating Agendas, Negotiating Identities**

After announcing in October 1864 that the regime was holding meetings with the Yucatecan businessmen to discuss the foundation of German colonies in Yucatán,<sup>139</sup> the *Periódico oficial de Mérida* started to link foreign immigration directly to progress, highlighting the advantages it would bring for the region and announcing in a celebratory tone the steps the Empire was taking in this regard. The settlers were presented as a civilizing and pacifying labor force: Given their knowledge, they would contribute to improving agricultural techniques and, because they would be settling in abandoned property close to the frontier, their presence would help to conclude the Caste War without resorting to more violence, but "by means of civilization and progress."<sup>140</sup> As a document shows, Salazar Ilarregui had by then already decided to set the German farmers "on the border ... [to the cruzoob-held area] ... in order to demonstrate to this people ... [the yucatecos] ... that their fear for the indígenas is totally out of proportion."<sup>141</sup> That meant to locate the colonists as a defense barrier between the "safe zone," extending those days circa 100 kilometers around Mérida and the defense lines running south and east (Figure 1).

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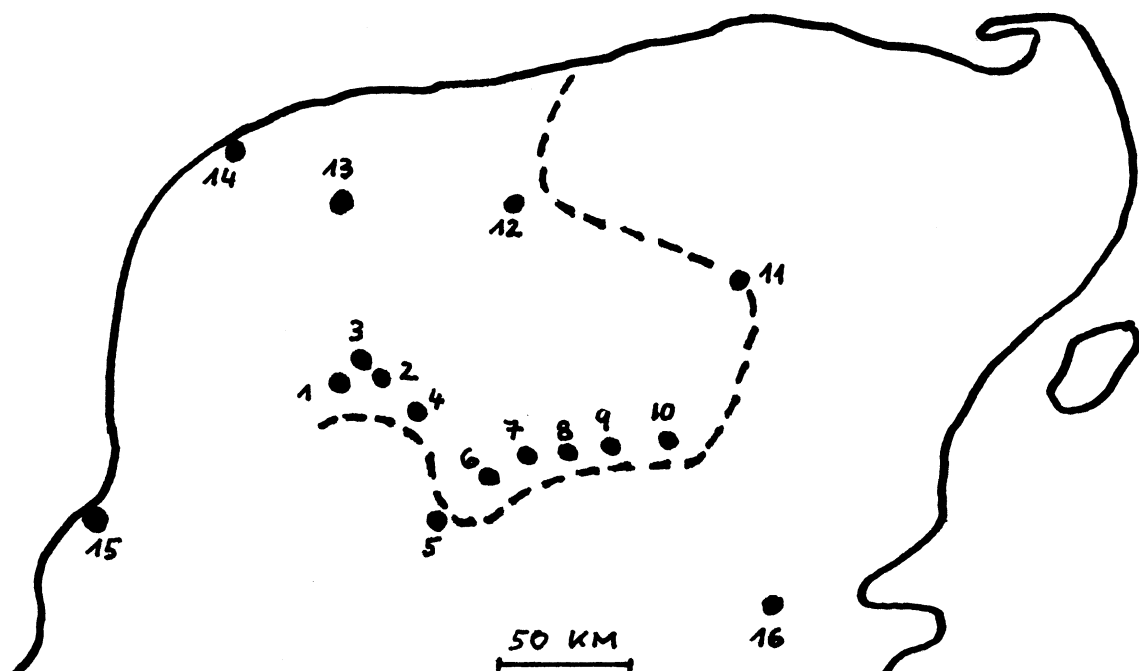
*Maximilian von Mexico und seiner Frau Charlotte* (Wien: Amaltea), p. 349; CANTO MAYÉN 2006, p. 116.

<sup>138</sup> MEYERS Konversations-Lexikon, 1851, vol. 10, "Kolonist", p. 623.

<sup>139</sup> MENÉNDEZ GONZÁLEZ 1937, p. 347.

<sup>140</sup> See for example: Mejoras Positivas, Nov. 14, 1864, *Periódico oficial del Departamento de Mérida* (hereafter cited as *PoDM*),

<sup>141</sup> Salazar Ilarregui to Maximilian, Mérida, Nov. 7, 1864, ÖSt, KMM, K. 18.

**Figure 1. The Yucatán Peninsula: German Settlements and the Caste War (1864-1866)**

Drawing by Stephan Merk, 2007.

Sources: Based on data obtained from REED 1964; MOLINA SOLÍS 1937, and documents consulted in AGEY and CAIHY, 1864-1866.

Legend:

1. Santa Elena	5. Becanchén	9. Ichmul	13. Mérida
2. Pustunich	6. Tzucacab	10. Tihosuco	14. Sisal
3. Ticul	7. Peto	11. Valladolid	15. Campeche
4. Tekax	8. Dzonochel	12. Izamal	16. Chan Santa Cruz

----- Signals the approximate border of the cruzoob-held territory to the south and east.

The cruzoob, whose largest and most important group was located in Chan Santa Cruz, were at that time holding the west and south portions of the peninsula under their control. Both Hispanic and peaceful Maya population retreated to the northeast of the state. The Yucatecan military defense line of the south, with headquarters in Tekax, had as forward posts the towns of Ichmul and Tihosuco, which were strictly military camps, and military colonies in Peto and Dzonotchel; on the east side, Valladolid served as headquarters, and there were garrisons at Espita and Tizimín, while the line of the center was guarded at Izamal.<sup>142</sup> All these posts

<sup>142</sup> REED 1964, pp. 187-188.

were, however, to some degree permeable, and the cruzoob often attacked haciendas, ranchos and villages close to the border. Considering that the easternmost part of the peninsula and the "safe zone" were almost full with plantations, the only property made available was probably close to the defense lines, which had been abandoned as unsafe. However, as it appears, the Imperial Commissioner did not see a risk to the safety of the colonists, nor to the investment of the Empire, by setting the colonists there, but thought of it as an opportunity to "teach" the Yucatecan elite a lesson. From his reports to Maximilian I interpret that he thought not only the indígenas needed to be "educated," but also the oligarchy, assignment that I would name as a "double-civilizing mission": To "educate" the Hispanics of Yucatán and the Maya alike. And apparently Maximilian did not disagree. It is also noticeable that no concerns about the land's productivity were expressed in Salazar Ilarregui's letters.

Equally revealing is the 1864 report of activities from Miguel Barreiro, Secretary of Salazar Ilarregui. Colonization is dealt with in a good portion of this 79 page long report.<sup>143</sup> Although the traditional economical, technological and cultural advantages attributed to migration are reviewed—quoting here and there Queen Elizabeth of England and Frederick der Große—the emphasis was placed on colonization as the "only remedy to save Yucatán" from the damages brought about by the constant uprisings in the state, meaning both the cruzoob and those from political factions. Barreiro argues that foreign colonists are urgently needed given that the peninsula has "no economical means to support more military expenses." This could be interpreted as a shift of priorities in the functions of the colonists, at least in public discourse: Instead of "educators" they are to play more the role of military envoys, to create a buffer zone against the cruzoob and to pacify the local elites. Are those objectives possible and compatible? Apparently the regime did not question that. Additionally, Barreiro's report confirms that there was opposition on part of the elite to the colonization project. In summary, there is fear that the Germans could be a threat to the interests of the local economy and that they would impose their culture and language; he goes into detail promising economical advantages for the yucatecos and assuring that miscegenation will take place, and that the next generation would not distinguish any more between the children of locals and the those from Germans.

The fact is that, not counting on tangible support of the Yucatecan elite, Salazar Ilarregui moved forward, and appointed Moritz von Hippel, a German engineer, member of the Scientific Commission of Yucatán who had arrived with him to the peninsula, to Director

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<sup>143</sup> Miguel BARREIRO, 1864, *Porvenir de Yucatán y ligera hojeada sobre su situación actual* (Mérida: Pedrera).

of the German Colonies in Yucatán.<sup>144</sup> On November 25, von Hippel left for Europe to recruit colonists and the news was published in the local official newspaper.<sup>145</sup> Von Hippel was supplied by Salazar Ilarregui with special instructions, \$15,000 pesos to cover initial expenses, and a pamphlet entitled "Vorschriften für Auswanderer über die Colonisation von Yucatan" to accomplish his mission.<sup>146</sup> The ambiguity of the brochure's title has a reason: The exact places for the settlements were still unclear. Accordingly, the Imperial Commissioner appointed a team to survey possible location of the colonies, while continuing his efforts to try to get support and cultivatable lands, from the *terratenientes*.

#### 4. The Search for the Ideal Location

The German naturalist Arthur Schott and the local engineer Joaquín Hübbe were appointed as the team to survey, test and recommend the most promising locations for the settlements.<sup>147</sup> Arthur Carl Victor Schott, a German engineer, geologist, ethnologist and artist, served as a naturalist in the Scientific Commission of Yucatán.<sup>148</sup> Member of several international scientific organizations, he contributed regularly to the German ethnological magazine *Das Ausland* (Cotta Verlag, Augsburg), providing an account of the arrival in 1865 of the first group of Germans to Yucatán, which will be used as a source in this thesis. The second member of the team, Joaquín Hübbe y García Rejón was an engineer, son of a German immigrant.<sup>149</sup> Belonging himself to the Yucatecan elite, he married Joaquina Peón y Fajardo, daughter of a powerful hacendado. He was appointed Counselor of the Regency, and served

<sup>144</sup> Moritz von Hippel (b. in Kessel, Prussia, Jan. 1, 1818; m. in Schlesien, 1845; d. in Saint Thomas, Feb. 11, 1895). Served as Director of the Mexican Telegraph Office (Telephone conversation, Wolfgang von Hippel, Apr. 24, 2003). As Director of the German Colonies in Yucatán he was assigned a monthly salary of 200 pesos. *Cuenta de los gastos invertidos en la Comisión Científica de la Península de Yucatán en el primer y segundo semestre de 1865*, CAIHY, XLVIII, 1865, 1/4, 029. On their part, PFERDEKAMP (1958, pp. 179-180) and RATZEL (1969, pp. 377-378) mistakenly recorded the name as "von Hiller." Thereafter, all other researchers have carried the error along. Original documents consulted in German and Yucatecan archives refer clearly to "von Hippel."

<sup>145</sup> *Gacetilla*, *PoDM*, Nov. 1864. See also México y los Estados Unidos, Inmigración Extranjera, *ibidem*, Dec. 19, 1864; Colonización, *PoDY*, Apr. 5, 1865; Decreto del 28 de marzo sobre la Junta de Colonización, *ibidem*, Apr. 25, 1865.

<sup>146</sup> Berlin, Apr. 20, 1865, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (hereafter cited as GStPK), Hauptabteilung III, 2.4.1, III, no. 14549), fol. 85.

<sup>147</sup> Contrary to what MENÉNDEZ GONZÁLEZ (1937, p. 387) wrote, only these two men formed the commission, and none of them was a colonist. Carlos Joung [sic] and Carlos Berger were settlers who arrived in Yucatán in 1865.

<sup>148</sup> Arthur Schott (b. in Stuttgart, Feb. 27, 1814; d. in Georgetown, Jul. 26, 1875); studied in Germany, worked in Rumania—where among his research as naturalists he compiled popular fairytales—and in the US-México boundary survey after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. He arrived to Yucatán in 1864.

<sup>149</sup> Joaquín Hübbe y García Rejón (b. in Campeche, Dec. 25, 1832; m. in Mérida, Aug. 21, 1859; d. in Mérida, Dec. 31, 1901); studied in the United States and in Germany, and worked in India and Egypt, before returning to settle definitively in Mérida at the beginning of the 1860's. See: J.M. VALDÉS ACOSTA, 1936, *A través de las centurias: historia genealógica de las familias yucatecas*, vol. 2 (Mérida: Pluma y Lápiz.), pp. 137, 140-141.

as member of several commissions in Yucatán during the Second Empire.

In theory, these professionals were to recommend the locations for the settlements “after a careful examination of the land and its conditions, a thorough evaluation of the characteristics of the terrain [while also taking under consideration] the culture, traditions and preferences to which the colonizers were used to in their homeland, as well as the kind of products they would harvest.”<sup>150</sup> Those products, according to the recruiting pamphlet, were cotton, henequen and tobacco.

Salazar Ilarregui requested the cooperation from the Prefecto Político of Yucatán (Appendix B) and from the Subprefectos of the head towns by reporting possible locations. But most of the land in productive, safe areas was being claimed by the hacendados, who did not show any intention to lease, sell or give away any of it. The search appears to have been concentrated, then, on the terrenos baldíos within the jurisdiction of already existing villages. Initially, the location chosen for the first German colony was the town of Tzucacab,<sup>151</sup> located 14 kilometers west-southwest of Peto, right on the defense line of the south (Fig. 1). But during the last week of November 1864, while von Hippel was already on his way to recruit colonizers, the Tzucacab area was attacked by the cruzoob.<sup>152</sup> In three days, 14 locations and seven ranches were plundered and destroyed, 37 people were killed and 20 injured. Not counting on Tzucacab as an option any more, the regime attempted to find an alternative. In several requests, written in a tone which goes from friendly to slightly irritated, the Imperial officers solicited from different departments and towns an inventory of land available. It wasn't until October 3, 1865, that the town of Becanchén, located circa 30 kilometers south of Tzucacab—around 45 southwest of Peto—outside the defense line, was selected.<sup>153</sup> But Becanchén was more dangerous, given its isolation and closeness to the cruzoob, so that as soon as this second attempt was orchestrated, it was also brought to an abrupt stop.<sup>154</sup> A little later, on the 25 of that same month, came a new order from Mérida, being to get the village of Santa Elena ready to house the colonizers.<sup>155</sup>

Santa Elena, the old Nohcacab, is located circa 100 kilometers away from Mérida. In

<sup>150</sup> Colonos, *PoDY*, Nov. 3, 1865.

<sup>151</sup> The Prefecto Político de Yucatán to the Subprefecto de Ticul (hereafter cited as Prefecto and Subprefecto respectively), Mérida, July 24, 1866, Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán (hereafter cited as AGEY), Municipios Ticul (hereafter cited as M-T), c. 8, vol. 2. For a list of officeholders during the Second Empire, please refer to Appendix B.

<sup>152</sup> Los indios bárbaros, *PoDM*, Dec. 12, 1864.

<sup>153</sup> The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Ticul, Oct. 3, 1865, AGEY, M-T, 1865, c. 14, v. 18; *idem* to *idem*, Oct. 5, 1865, *ibidem*.

<sup>154</sup> *Idem* to *idem*, Oct. 15, 1865, *ibidem*.

<sup>155</sup> *Idem* to *idem*, Oct. 25, 1865, *ibidem*.

those days it was a village with around 1,200 inhabitants, most of them Maya, and a very small group of Hispanics, who owned *ranchos* or *sitios*<sup>156</sup> in the area which had in better times been modestly profitable. Administratively, it depended on the main town of Ticul, located three hours away by footpath. How did Santa Elena become an option? The district of Ticul, had since the middle of 1864 reported land available for colonization in the villages depending on it. Santa Elena accounted having large areas of unused land immediately available, a very low population, and was impoverished. In his report the Juez de Paz (Municipal Commissary) Desiderio Lizárraga wrote that the cruzoob had burned and plundered the village twice in 1849, attacks from which Santa Elena had not been able to recover: The population had dropped from 4,025 to only 1,220 people, urban properties had lost 2/3 of their nominal value and the economical activity had plummeted 85%.<sup>157</sup> That made 56.5 *solares* (residential lots) in the village available, plus large extensions of cultivatable land in the immediate area. Lizárraga also pointed out that the village counted on barely 100 to 150 men for defending it. That was probably read by the officials in Mérida—several of them members of the Yucatecan elite—as being close to an impossibility to resist another cruzoob assault, and, given the strategic location of the village, as an unprotected point from where the rebels could attack some of the larger haciendas in the area, advancing even closer to the Yucatecan capital. Although not officially part of the fire line, many documents list Santa Elena under the *pueblos fronterizos*, border towns. Indeed, it had been since the beginning of the 1860's the scenario of military movements, received warnings against cruzoob attacks, suffered military draws, and been forced to provide war supplies.<sup>158</sup>

Until now, no documents have been located which could indicate that Santa Elena was even once scouted by Hübbe or Schott. But for good or bad, the colonists were already on their way.

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<sup>156</sup> Small commercial estates, less capitalized than the haciendas.

<sup>157</sup> Memoria comparativa y estadística del pueblo de Santa Elena, partido de Ticul, antes y después de la sublevación de los indios, Santa Elena, May 12, 1864, AGEY, M-T, c. 11, v. 15.

<sup>158</sup> Several folders in Yucatecan, Mexican and European archives contain this kind of correspondence. See, for example Circular, Ticul to Sacalum, Muna and Santa Elena, Mar. 23, 1862, *ibidem*, c. 4, v. 4, e. 5.

### III. The Settlers of Villa Carlota

The Second Empire set its cards on foreign immigration in order to be able to make out of México a modern and prosperous country. With Maximilian's approval, the Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán moved forward with the project entitled "Colonias alemanas en Yucatán,"<sup>1</sup> and attempted to recruit German settlers, mostly farmers and artisans.

But perhaps one should start by asking, did Germans at all want to migrate into México as colonists? Based on her analysis of popular German newspapers from 1821 to 1861, Brígida von Mentz concluded that México's image as a convoluted country was rather discouraging for mass migration.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it is hereby proposed that by the middle of the 1860's the intersection of three international events created a small window of opportunity in favor of México. First, in 1859 Prussia issued an official warning, the so-called *Heydtsches Reskript*, discouraging migration into Brazil, denouncing discrimination against Protestants and abuses committed against Germans and Swiss in the *fazendas* of Sao Paulo.<sup>3</sup> Then, the temporary overlap of three wars in 1864-1865—namely the American Civil War (1861-1865), the Paraguayan War against Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay (1864-1870), and the Spanish War against Perú, Chile, Ecuador and Bolivia (1865-1871)—limited the number of target destinations. Finally, when one adds the fact that since the dawn of the French Intervention some German newspapers and publications showed increased interest in México,<sup>4</sup> sometimes even forecasting that an European prince would stabilize the country and offer their compatriots opportunities to exploit it, it could be thinkable that México gained in attractiveness as a possible destination for those whose socio-economic conditions in the place of origin were either deteriorating or had already become unsustainable. Which socioeconomic groups were those?

If in between 1815 and 1865 mostly German families from the west and southwest migrated, 1865 marks a shift, in which not only families but a considerable number of singles from the north and northeast areas searched for better opportunities overseas, most

<sup>1</sup> German settlements in Yucatán.

<sup>2</sup> VON MENTZ 1992, p. 457.

<sup>3</sup> [T: fazendas = large ranches, plantations or farms]. Walter KAMPHOEFNER, 1999, Who Went South? The Choice of Destination among German Immigrants in the Nineteenth-Century, *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, no. 14:42, pp. 23-47, here p. 32; Magnus MÖRNER, 1985, *Adventurers and Proletarians* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> KAMPHOEFNER 1999, pp. 29, 31; Monica URBACH, 1987, *Mexico zwischen Republik und Monarchie. Europas Kampf um Mexico vom Interventionskrieg 1861 bis zum Ende des Maximilianischen Kaiserreiches 1867 in der Beurteilung der deutschen Presse – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der „Allgemeinen Zeitung“* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang), pp. 18-21. See also *Das Ausland*, for the years 1864-1866.



of them farmers, workers and artisans who either feared impoverishment or found themselves already in need and without many options for the future.<sup>5</sup> And that is precisely the area—north and northeast—where Moritz von Hippel concentrated his recruiting efforts, and where he was able to enlist more than 400 people as colonists.

But what is known until now about the composition of Villa Carlota? Most authors, who have given approximations regarding its size, have relied only on newspaper articles or on second accounts.<sup>6</sup> A more detailed analysis inquiring, for example, about the area of origin and socioeconomic background of the colonists has not been done yet. What follows now is an attempt to sketch a profile of the Villa Carlotans and interpret it. My departure point for this analysis are the migration lists captured by the port authority in Hamburg corresponding to the two trips chartered in 1865 and 1866 by von Hippel on behalf of the Mexican Empire to transport the settlers.<sup>7</sup>

The content of these boarding lists, whose originals are housed in the Staatsarchiv Hamburg in Germany, provides some basic personal information about the settlers, such as place of origin, age and sex, while also allowing to broadly approach the social and economical status of the immigrants through their declared occupations. Nevertheless, the fact that the travel permits were not attached to the lists, and are not to be found in the already mentioned archive, produces some gaps which are important to address in advance. To overcome the limitations imposed by the unclear description and/or inexact translations of some work categories, for example that of an *Arbeiter*, I have decided to present a breakdown of the categories in German language. Thanks to the fact that the entries of women were to certain degree fulfilled, it is possible to reconstruct names, age, place of origin and civil situation, missing only their occupations. Whenever possible, additional information regarding those cases is provided, as well as the sources from where it comes. By these means it is intended to create a differentiated image of the immigrants, which could bring light into the objectives behind the recruitment and selection of the colonists, what was envisioned for the settlement and perhaps even its chances for success.

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<sup>5</sup> Peter MARSCHALCK, 1973, *Deutsche Überseewanderung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Klett), pp. 12, 82-83.

<sup>6</sup> The estimates vary between 213 and 500.

<sup>7</sup> Verzeichniss der Personen, welche mit dem hamburgischen Schiffe San Luis, Capitain Reimer, nach Sisal (Mexico) zur Auswanderung durch Unterzeichneten engagirt sind. Aug. 24, 1865, Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Auswandererlisten VIII A1, Band 19, Microfilm: K1710/1711, Jan. 7–Dec. 23, 1865, pp. 677-684, (hereafter cited as StAH 1865); *Ibidem*, May 15, 1866, StAH, Auswandererlisten VIII A1, Band 20, Microfilm: K1711/1712, Jan. 6–Oct. 22, 1866, pp. 498-503, (hereafter cited as StAH 1866). Based on the data obtained from these lists, I have estimated all tables and figures I am presenting in this chapter.

### A. Place of Origin of the Settlers of Villa Carlota

Von Hippel, as said, was able to enroll in his 1865 trip to Germany two groups of colonists who departed from Hamburg to the Yucatecan port of Sisal.<sup>8</sup> The first group—on August 24, 1865—was formed by 228 people. The second group, with 215 persons, left on May 15, 1866, adding up to 443 colonizers. Given that the objective in this chapter is to develop a group portrait of the Villa Carlotans, both groups will be analyzed as a totality. The first step would be to determine where the colonists came from. As Table 1 shows, 433 people—that is 98% of the emigrants—came from German states, while only eight persons registered a different country of origin. Additionally, for two entries there was no place of origin written down, therefore they have been registered in the following table as such. However, because of their last names, both people were probably German.

**Table 1: Registered Country of Origin of the Settlers of Villa Carlota**

Origin	1865	1866	Total
Austria	3	2	5
Brazil	1	-	1
Germany	220	213	433
Switzerland	2	-	2
<u>Did not register a country of origin</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	228	215	443

Of the emigrants accounted as Germans, as Table 2 shows, the more numerous group, representing about 72%, came from Prussia. The second largest group was that of the people of Anhalt, circa 16%. The remaining percentage came from six other German states. It is timely to highlight that those geographical areas had both Catholic and Protestant inhabitants. This characteristic is also found among the Villa Carlotans, based on the information I consulted in parishes books both in Germany and in Yucatán.

<sup>8</sup> There is evidence that von Hippel stayed in Germany from Jan. until Sept. 1865. It is possible to conclude that during that period he signed up all the colonists and made the necessary arrangements for their transportation. As some accounts from immigrants back up, not all of them were able to migrate overseas on short notice. Specially those having property, such as a farm or a small business, needed time to sell it.

**Table 2: Regional Origin of the German Settlers of Villa Carlota**

Origin	1865	1866	Total
Anhalt	11	60	71
Braunschweig	1	-	1
Hamburg	-	2	2
Hannover	6	13	19
Holstein	1	-	1
Prussia	180	138	312
Sachsen	17	-	17
Schwarzburg-Sondershausen	4	-	4
Total	220	213	433

Given that most of the people came from Prussia, in the following section the general conditions in that state will be looked at, in an attempt to determine some of the push factors<sup>9</sup> which could have contributed to this group migration. Considering that within the Prussians a total of 75 people, that is around 24%, came from the area made up by the neighboring communities of Staßfurt, Alt-Staßfurt, and Leopoldshall, today located in Sachsen-Anhalt, the living circumstances of the middle-low to low income groups of this area around Villa Carlota's time will be highlighted.

### **1. Situation in Prussia around 1865**

Until the foundation of the German Reich in 1871, Germany was still fragmented into kingdoms and *Fürstentümer*, whose most important player during the second half of the nineteenth century was Prussia. Before Maximilian's acceptance of the Mexican Crown, Prussia's diplomatic "interest in Mexico was occasional and indifferently cordial."<sup>10</sup> As a result of what has been by some scholars perceived as a willful delay from King William I and his Ministerpräsident Otto von Bismarck in extending full recognition to Maximilian's regime, until 1865 there was only an inactive mission under Consul Stephan von Benecke in Imperial México.<sup>11</sup> In March 1865 Bismarck selected Baron Anton von Magnus as

<sup>9</sup> Referring to the Push-pull-theory to explain migration within a wider political and economical context: When the conditions in an external location appear more promising than those in the place of residence, people are more inclined to migrate. For the classical model of this theory see: Ernest RAVENSTEIN, 1889, Laws of Migration, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, no. 52:2, pp. 241-305; for a reformulation of the classical model which emphasizes the role of the push-factors, consult: Lee EVERETT, 1966, A Theory of Migration, *Demography*, no. 3, pp. 47-57.

<sup>10</sup> Frank G. WEBER, 1966, Bismarck's Man in Mexico: Anton von Magnus and the End of Maximilian's Empire, *HAHR*, no. 46:1, pp. 53-65, here p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> BLUMBERG 1987, p. 68.

preußischer Ministerresident to México, heading what was actually to become the last from all diplomatic corps to be accredited to the Mexican Empire, arriving in the capital towards the end of February of 1866.<sup>12</sup> This, in relationship to German non-elite migration to México, could have meant that the potential colonizers did not for some time have a diplomatic representation to safeguard their interest while in México.<sup>13</sup>

Based on Article Eleven of the Prussian State's Constitution of May 31, 1850, the freedom to migrate was a right guaranteed to all Prussian citizens, being limited only in the cases when military service had to be rendered.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the states and their intermediaries, such as the migration societies (*Auswanderungsvereine*), saw their role as that of informing or perhaps making aware of some pitfalls about certain migration destinations. But it was especially after the middle of the 1850's that these associations attempted to guide people towards projects they perceived as realistic and appropriate for national development.<sup>15</sup> These objectives were reinforced in the 1860's when colonization was equated to a politic of power, adding the elements of conservation of the "German element" and economical overseas expansion.<sup>16</sup>

Who could have considered leaving Prussia as a colonist around the sixties and why? In general, three groups of people: Destitute farmers, displaced artisans and unemployed workers, who had come to form a large proletarian class by the middle of the century.<sup>17</sup>

The landsmen were mostly victims of the structural changes of Germany's agrarian system, the so called *Bauernbefreiung*, which left many of them without large enough tracts to cultivate profitably and/or for cattle-raising, which was of major importance as a supply of dairy products for these families.<sup>18</sup> According to Klaus J. Bade, the situation in

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 68-70; Joachim KÜHN, 1965, *Das Ende des maximilianischen Kaiserreichs in Mexico* (Berlin: Musterschmidt), p. 69. For a discussion about the possible double-role played by Bismarck during the Mexican Second Empire, see WEBER 1966.

<sup>13</sup> Some documents seem to indicate that before 1866 German colonists were perceived as unproblematic by the Mexican government. The receiving country did not see the possibility of diplomatic pressure, since there wasn't a unified and active diplomatic representation interested in engaging itself on behalf of the settlers. However, it would be necessary to consult other sources to be able to support that assertion.

<sup>14</sup> VERFASSUNGSRUNDE für den Preußischen Staat, Jan. 31, 1850, Titel II. Von den Rechten der Preußen, <http://www.verfassungen.de/de/preussen/preussen50-index.htm>, (accessed May 11, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> MARSCHALK 1973, pp. 17-18, 20, 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> Peter MARSCHALCK, 1984, *Bevölkerungsgeschichte Deutschlands im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp), pp. 29-30.

<sup>18</sup> Hermann von FREEDEN und Georg SMOLKA, 1937, *Auswanderer. Bilder und Skizzen aus der Geschichte der deutschen Auswanderung* (Weimar: Duncker), pp. 37-38.

the 1860's was the result of changes which began to appear in the previous century, sharpened by the first World Economic Crisis, in 1859-1860: Demographic growth, the large land owners' encroaching of property, changes in cultivation forms, and a frequent division of the cultivatable plots which crystallized in too small, or even totally nonexistent, land inheritance among rural populations.<sup>19</sup> It is estimated that around one million farmers had to their use only nine and a half percent of the available surface, meaning that a large population of poor, in many cases destitute, agrarian workers—almost without a middle class in between—stood against a small number of powerful *Großgrundbesitzer*.<sup>20</sup>

We need to add to the equation that since the 1840's machinery was set in agrarian production, which displaced many farmers, reducing some of them to seasonal workers or day laborers (*Tagelöhner*), a situation to which people responded in different ways: While some took additional industrial outwork (*Heimarbeit*)—having to labor sometimes as much as 16 hours a day and living, nevertheless, barely on the minimum—others migrated.<sup>21</sup> In the case of destitute farmers, it is argued that they also lost their *Heimatliebe*. Their sense of belonging damaged, it was perhaps easier to depart.<sup>22</sup> But not everyone who went abroad was penniless. Many farmers with slightly larger properties were nevertheless in difficulty if they had a numerous family. Seeing their living conditions rapidly deteriorating, some considered it better to sell their land when they could still get some reasonable money for it and reinvest that income in a more promising start overseas.<sup>23</sup>

The large number of unemployed skilled and unskilled workers came about as a result of the industrialization which, even though it created work opportunities in that area, also drove many traditional occupations into obsolescence, made unprofitable small businesses and left many others without a job.<sup>24</sup> Small home-based industries, although initially protecting some people from being forced to migrate in search for work, became with time less and less lucrative. Quickly, industrial production became a devastating

<sup>19</sup> BADE 2000, pp. 19, 143. This was particularly noticeable in Protestant areas, where inheritance rights were equal for all children. Contrary, in Catholic areas, the first born or first son would customarily be the heir.

<sup>20</sup> Wolfgang JACOBET und Sigrid JACOBET, 1987, *Illustrierte Alltagsgeschichte des deutschen Volkes 1810-1900*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Urania), p. 58; Wilhelm MÖNCKMEIER, 1912, *Die deutsche überseeische Auswanderung* (Jena: Fischer), pp. 99.

<sup>21</sup> JACOBET und JACOBET 1987, p. 58.

<sup>22</sup> Von FREEDEN und SMOLKA 1937, p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Hildegard ROSENTHAL, 1931, *Die Auswanderung aus Sachsen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Ausland und Heimat), pp. 35-36.

<sup>24</sup> JACOBET und JACOBET 1987, pp. 58-61; BADE 2000, p. 166; von FREEDEN und SMOLKA 1937, p. 42.

competitor for many artisans and small goods producers, especially for family-run businesses,<sup>25</sup> while, at the same time, intraregional migration to the industrial zones deteriorated the living conditions in many Prussian locations.<sup>26</sup> There were also people who could simply not adjust to the new demands of industrialization, while some of the workers still employed felt that the specialization of labor brought about by the use of machines was setting limits to the use of their skills, and others were apprehensive about not been able to keep up with technology and feared being fired. Macroeconomic factors also played a role: The American Civil War put a stop to the delivery of cotton, necessary for some of the major industries in this area, and many factories closed down.<sup>27</sup>

To these socioeconomic changes, one should add the burdens of bureaucracy, high taxes, the fears of suffering hunger and wars—the last one more menacing after the Schleswig/Holstein confrontation, which followed the war with Denmark in 1864, and in view of an expected war between Prussia and Austria, which indeed took place in 1866. Given the complexity of the push factors, migration could not be seen only as a personal economic decision, but also as a form of social protest and as a family project, in which the desire to search for a better life in freedom also played a role.<sup>28</sup> So, perhaps Friedrich Gerstäcker was right when he said in 1861 at a conference given in Rio de Janeiro, that "die beiden Haupthebel deutscher Auswanderung sind unbedingt: Noth und Phantasie."<sup>29</sup>

Within Prussia a potential point for emigration seems to have been the area around Staßfurt from where, as mentioned above, the largest group from a single location joining Villa Carlota came. The development of Staßfurt, Alt Staßfurt, and Leopoldshall goes together, as well as its problems. With the introduction of the railway in 1856 the area not only grew but boomed. From having a little more than 2,000 inhabitants in 1850, the population in the first two communities increased by 150% to 5,050 in the year 1860, duplicating to 10,300 by 1870.<sup>30</sup> Industries and businesses flourished around the exploitation of potash salt (*Kali-Salz*), carbon and metal. A middle and upper class developed quickly, meaning that not only investors but also managers at different levels,

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<sup>25</sup> BADE 2000, p. 74; MÖNCKMEIER 1912, pp. 154-155, 159.

<sup>26</sup> MÖNCKMEIER 1912, pp. 154-155.

<sup>27</sup> ROSENTHAL 1931, pp. 30-31.

<sup>28</sup> BADE 2000, pp. 66, 168.

<sup>29</sup> Cited in: Karl Jürgen ROTH, 1989, *Die Darstellung der deutschen Auswanderung in den Schriften Friedrich Gerstäckers* (Braunschweig: Friedrich Gerstäcker-Verlagsgesellschaft), p. 28.

<sup>30</sup> Wolfgang REUTER, Kurt OHLENDORF und Günther HEUBLEIN, 1981, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung im Kreis Staßfurt*, vol. 1 (Staßfurt: a.p.), p. 37.

sales people and middle level workers came to the area. But also a large number of poor people immigrated looking for work in the mines and chemical industries. Some of them found employment—even if low paid—but not all. Many farmers lost their lands to the upcoming industries, a large number of artisans and peasants who had too small properties, or none left, became dependent on salaries from employers.

The towns did not have the infrastructure for such a demographic explosion. Resources, institutions and services were insufficient, becoming also very expensive and inaccessible to large segments of the population.<sup>31</sup> Leopoldshall, being a neighboring community, became one of the workers' improvised housing areas. If in 1858 it only had six houses, by 1864 there were 152, but basically without services. That fostered frequent epidemics, which spread out to the three towns. In 1866 more than 3,000 people contracted cholera, and 1,550 died as a consequence of it.<sup>32</sup> From these communities, fourteen families and one single person migrated to Yucatán in 1865 and 1866.

Having considered some of the push factors behind that decision to migrate from Prussia more questions come up: But why specifically into Yucatán? What were some of the pull factors making the Villa Carlota project attractive? What did the settlers expected to obtain by joining this colony?

### **B. Moritz von Hippel and his Mission in Germany**

Considering that von Hippel left the Yucatecan port of Sisal in November 1864, he likely arrived in Germany towards the end of that same year. He began immediately to distribute the already mentioned pamphlet "Vorschriften für Auswanderer über die Colonisation von Yucatan." In March 1865, a few requests for information about the project—both from potential colonizers as well as from governmental officials—reached the Ministerium des Inneren in Prussia.<sup>33</sup> The Ministry answered that there was no specific prohibition against migration into Yucatán, although an official warning against all colonization in México had been issued since October 2, 1861, adding that they could not say anything specific about von Hippel's project.<sup>34</sup> That basically meant that those who disregarding this

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 35-36, 40

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 37-38, 40.

<sup>33</sup> Ludwig Kolzer and August Rosemann, Altwasser, Schlesien, to the Königliche Hofes, Ministerium, Mar. 27, 1865, GStPK, Hauptabteilung III, 2.4.1, III, no. 14549, fol. 81sv-82 sv; [?] to the Graf zu Eulenburg, Ministerium des Inneren, Berlin, Apr. 20, 1865, *ibidem*, fol. 85.

<sup>34</sup> [?] to the Graf zu Euleburg, Ministerium des Inneren, Berlin, Apr. 1, 1865, *ibidem*, fol. 83; [?] to the Porzellan[drucker?] August Rosemann in Altwasser, Apr. 20, 1865, *ibidem*, fol. 85.

admonition decided to migrate did so at their own risk. It is important to note that Bismarck—who was both Ministerpräsident and Außenminister from Prussia—was informed about the Yucatecan project by the Ministerium des Inneren,<sup>35</sup> but did not issue a specific prohibition. In spite of the summons, the project seems to have awoken some interest: People continued to request information and shortly after official warnings specifically against the colonization of Yucatán started to appear in different publications. The first one, published in the first week of April of 1865, reads:

Der Agent Max von Hippel aus Mexiko hat vor Kurzem eine Druckschrift, in welcher die Auswanderung nach Mexiko, insbesondere nach der Halbinsel Yukatan, in vielversprechender Weise empfohlen und von ihm die Bereitwilligkeit zu weiterer Auskunft und zum Abschluß von Auswanderungsverträgen ausgesprochen wird, im Herzogthume verbreitet.

Diesen Geschäftsbetrieb haben wir polizeilich einstellen lassen. Uebrigens warnen wir hierdurch eindringlich vor der Auswanderung nach Mexiko unter den jetzigen Verhältnissen, welche weder eine Sicherheit für die Erfüllung der Versprechungen, die den Auswanderern gegeben werden, noch die Aussicht auf eine erträgliche Existenz gewähren, und mahnen ernstlich von derselben ab. Zugleich weisen wir die Ortsbehörden an, durch angemessene Besprechung und Belehrung diejenigen Unterthanen, welche die Auswanderung nach Mexiko in Absicht genommen haben, von diesem Vorhaben zurückzuführen.

Dessau, 7. April 1865

Herzoglich Anhaltische Regierung  
Abtheilung des Innern und der Polizei  
v. Albert<sup>36</sup>

On April 22, this warning was reproduced by the *Allgemeine Auswanderungszeitung*,<sup>37</sup> being repeated and expanded one month later under the auspice of the Verein für Erdkunde in Dresden, Abteilung für Auswanderungs-Angelegenheiten.<sup>38</sup> The article paints a vivid picture of the poor weather and health conditions in Yucatán. Listed were the lack of surface water in such a dry, hot and poor area, its isolation, the impossibility to grow crops and raise cattle, and the absence of even the most basic items, such as cereals and soap. The writer doubts that immigrants could there openly practice the religion of their choosing. It is explicitly said that the country is in the midst of a civil war. In other words: All colonization efforts were discouraged. Although the report itself can be interpreted as

<sup>35</sup> Sulzer, Ministerium des Inneren to Bismarck, Berlin, Apr. 28, 1865, *ibidem*, fol. 84.

<sup>36</sup> *Anhaltinischer Staats-Anzeiger*, 1865, no. 59, p. 576.

<sup>37</sup> Halle: 20 April, *Allgemeine Auswanderungszeitung* (hereafter cited as AAz), Apr. 22, 1865.

<sup>38</sup> Warnung vor der Auswanderung nach Yucatan, *ibidem*, May 5, 1865.



in line with the prevailing image of México—which had been for many decades cultivated by journalists, diplomats and businesspeople—and as sound advice given the fragility of the newly founded Empire, or as realistic considering the dry conditions of Yucatán, questions arise when one pays attention to the inconsistencies within the same newspaper.

Although negative reports and warnings against México dominated during that time, positive coverage in the form of editorials and news was given to the colonization enterprise headed by the Ritter von Borvens, project already mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, paid advertisement for Borvens' project was published in the same newspaper. Thus, even if the *Auswanderungszeitung* had the intention to disseminate official information or to protect potential colonists, its own commercial interest created a conflict,<sup>40</sup> which probably resulted in confusion for some readers. In the Yucatecan press these advertising bans and warnings were considered as a result of the "exaggerated and false information" vicious people managed to spread in Germany,<sup>41</sup> which I interpret as an address to certain parts of the Mexican and Yucatecan elites opposing the regime's project. On his part, Schott accuses the "deutsche Presse, sowie die meisten der dortigen Regierungen, welche alle Auswanderungsschemen missliebig betrachten"<sup>42</sup> of attempting to boycott the well-intentioned Yucatecan efforts to gain settlers.

According to some scholars, the advice of the *Auswanderungszeitungen* barely reached potential colonizers because of their prices and their limited availability, given that sometimes they were only accessible through a reading club (*Leseverein*), to which large segments of the rural, impoverish population did not have access.<sup>43</sup> However, it appears that doubts and a certain degree of uncertainty about the enterprise transcended its print form, reaching the people. Schott reports that some of the colonists during the trip had "ein drückendes Gefühl der Unsicherheit [weil sie glaubten] an irgendeine land- und arbeitsspeculierende Sippe verkauft zu seyn."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, Feb. 19, 1865, p. 23; *ibidem*, Mar. 19, 1865, p. 39. A conflict of interest can be seen also in regards to other countries by reviewing the 1864-1866 issues of this newspaper.

<sup>40</sup> Although without providing an example, Marschalck has already brought awareness to the conflict of interest within the *Auswanderungspresse*: Warning against migration into certain countries while at the same time including paid advertisement for specific projects in those same regions. See MARSCHALCK 1973, p. 23.

<sup>41</sup> Colonos, *PoDY*, Oct. 27, 1865.

<sup>42</sup> Arthur SCHOTT, 1866, Deutsche Einwanderer in Yucatan, *Das Ausland*, no. 39, pp. 470-474, here p. 473.

<sup>43</sup> MARSCHALCK 1973, p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> SCHOTT 1866, p. 473.

### C. The Contract

Against all odds, von Hippel was able to enlist 443 colonists. What in concrete terms did he offer them? The pamphlet he distributed in 1865 is not kept in any of the archives until now consulted. Nevertheless, two official documents located in the Archivo General de Yucatán<sup>45</sup> and Schott's contribution in the German magazine *Das Ausland*, all until now unused sources, reproduce most of the articles of the contract into which Maximilian's Imperial Government and the German colonists entered. These will be the documents hereby used for attempting to reconstruct the conditions under which the colonists migrated.

First of all, it was clearly stated that German farmers and artisans were preferred as colonists in Yucatán. At the time of arrival, each family or single immigrant would be given between 50 and 60 hectares of land to cultivate.<sup>46</sup> From them, 20 hectares would be assigned by the regime in the immediate area of the colony, while the additional 40 hectares would be selected by the colonist himself from the terrenos baldíos. Over and above, an urban lot for housing—measuring 40 meters by 60—would be assigned per head of family. These plots were to be measured, delimited, marked, and registered by the government without any charges to the settlers. A property title would also be issued free of fees. After five years of successful work in México, each settler could dispose of the land initially given to him as desired, and would get another additional 60 hectares free of charge. The above mentioned rights would also be granted to each member of an immigrant family when turning 21 years of age.

If so requested by the immigrants—and judged as convenient by the Director of the colony, meaning the cases of honest, hard working people without immediate economic sources—some expenses could be financed by the Empire on the condition that they should be repaid by the colonist within a five year period free of interest. The advances under this category were: Overseas travel, transportation from Hamburg to the site of the colony,

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<sup>45</sup> Besides recurring to SCHOTT 1866, I examined the following documents: (1) The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Bases generales de la colonización en la península, Mérida, July 24, 1866, AGEY, M-T, c. 8; (2) Bittgesuch der deutschen Colonisten Villa Carlotta, Santa Elena, um Befreiung ihrer drückenden Lage, Villa Carlotta [sic] Aug. 8, 1866, AGEY, PE, c. 156. A copy of the original German letter is here attached as Appendix E, title under which it will be hereafter cited. In the same box was also a translation into Spanish of this document, entitled "Solicitud de los colonos de Santa Elena acusando á Mr. Von Hippel de falsedades y no cumplimiento á las promesas que les hizo al traerlos," Mérida, Aug. 23, 1866.

<sup>46</sup> There is a discrepancy between the information in the documents in Spanish, which stipulate 60 hectares, and Schott's article, in which a total of 50 hectares are stated.

materials for the construction of a house,<sup>47</sup> a few small animals,<sup>48</sup> a rifle with its corresponding provisions, as well as some basic food articles offered by the regime at special low, wholesale prices.<sup>49</sup> In case of breach of contract on part of the colonist, the regime would have the right to demand repayment and/or dispose of the property of the immigrant to recover its investment.

It is necessary to stress this aspect of Villa Carlota. In Chapter II, I proposed that the Maximilian State followed four different strategies to attract migration. Based on the colonization contract, the regime not only organized, but also financed the colony. Villa Carlota constitutes, then, the fourth way in which the Second Empire attempted to promote mass immigration: This being perhaps the first case of fully subsidized colonization in México. That was on paper, one could say. But how did it proceed in practice? Contrary to what has been stated in some accounts about Villa Carlota,<sup>50</sup> which indicate that no preparations were made to receive the colonizers nor was support offered to them during their time in Yucatán, the documents until now located in several archives, as I will discuss in Chapter IV, demonstrate that the Second Empire more or less honored the contract—at least until 1866, when the Empire started to collapse—succeeding in some aspects while falling short in others.

But there were more guarantees offered to the colonists under the contract. No duty was to be charged on their personal, professional and household items. They had the right to exercise the occupation of their choosing, and could, under certain circumstances and with previous approval, even settle in a different location as the one proposed by the government. They were tax-exempt for five years and free from military service,<sup>51</sup> but summoned to defend the colony, if needed. The settlers would administer their own colony in accordance with the legislation of the country, have their own school teacher and doctor,

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<sup>47</sup> The house's specifications read as follows: "Appropriate for the conditions and weather of the region, measuring twelve by six meters, with a thatch roof, using local materials ... with an additional coop for domestic animals."

<sup>48</sup> Two cows, two hogs and 10 chickens, with an estimated value of 24 pesos.

<sup>49</sup> Per week each colonist received 19 pounds of corn, one of rice, one of sugar as well as 12 ounces of coffee, plus a little over two *reales* in cash to buy fresh meat and lard. A real was equivalent to 1/8 of a peso.

<sup>50</sup> BOPP 1965, p. 264; BOPP 1979, p. 485; PFERDEKAMP 1958, p. 180; RATZEL 1969, p. 377.

<sup>51</sup> This paragraph shows more generous incentives for the Villa Carlotans than for the Confederate refugees. These last ones were freed one year from taxation and five from military service. Cf. HANNA and HANNA 1947, p. 240.

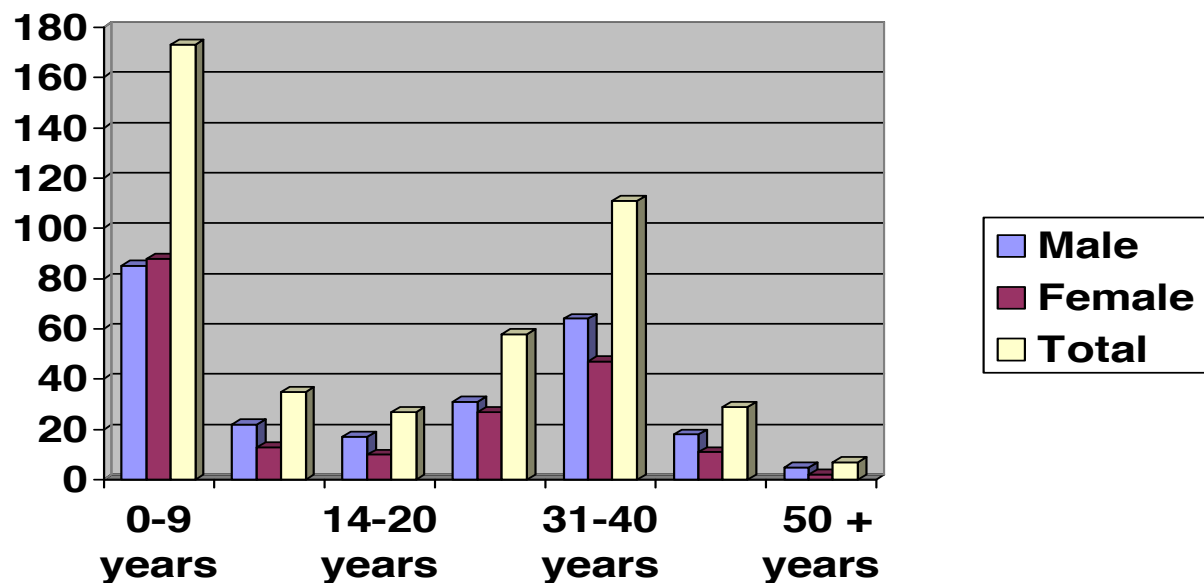
and have the right to exercise any Christian religion they wished. If they wanted, they could obtain Mexican citizenship, but there was no *naturalization forcée*.<sup>52</sup>

The above-mentioned stipulations could have been especially attractive for those with large families or no cash to finance an overseas migration. Which occupational groups thought Yucatán could offer them a good chance to improve their living conditions?

#### D. The Villa Carlotans: A Group Portrait

In the following, some of the socioeconomic characteristics of the settlers of Villa Carlota will be presented. First, their distribution by age and sex; later, their occupations. This data could be useful for considering to which level the image of the colonizers cultivated during the Second Empire could have been fulfilled or not by the people who were actually enlisted on the project.<sup>53</sup>

**Figure 2: The Colonists of Villa Carlota by Age and Sex**



<sup>52</sup> Issue apparently championed by Charlotte and Maximilian against the will of some of their traditional collaborators, functionaries who, so the Empress, represented "das alte Mexico," probably meaning that they had a conservative approach to immigration. See Charlotte to Maximilian, Palacio de México, May 1, 1865, printed in full by RATZ 2000, p. 206. See also HANNA and HANNA 1947, p. 236.

<sup>53</sup> There were previous cases in which considerable numbers of non-farmers were recruited as colonists for agricultural settlements, as for example by the Coatzacoalco's attempt. See: BERNINGER 1974, p. 72.

### 1. The Colonists of Villa Carlota by Age and Sex

As represented in Figure 2, Villa Carlota was a colonization program with a young population. From a total of 443 colonists, 440 entries contained readable information about the age and sex of colonists. Their distribution is hereunder analyzed:

- a) Children under 10 years of age: 173 follow in this category, which being the most numerous, represents 39% of the total. From them, 85 were males and 88 females.
- b) Between 10 and 13 years old: This category, representing circa eight percent, reflects the fact that in Yucatán at that time children started to work at the age of 10.<sup>54</sup> In this group 35 young persons were registered, 22 were males and 13 females.
- c) 14 to 20 years old: With 17 males and 10 females these 27 entries, representing around six percent of the total, encompass people who, according to the Hamburg boarding lists, were already considered as adults.
- d) 21 to 30 years old: Men outnumber women in this category, 31 to 27, adding up to 58. This category was the third largest, with 13%.
- e) 31 to 40 years old: This was the second largest group, representing about 25%, formed by 64 males and 47 females, adding up to 111.
- f) 41 and 50 years old: 18 men and 11 women were in this age group. They amounted to six and a half percent of the total.
- g) Over 50 years: This was the smallest group, barely one and a half percent, formed by five males and two females.

By considering the age of the colonists, one could propose that the high number of immigrants in the first three age categories, meaning all those 235 persons less than 21 years of age, which amount to 53%, could indicate that many parents migrated in an attempt to secure a future for those under their care. According to the colonization contract, each young person would have had the right to obtain 50 to 60 hectares of land of their own when turning 21 years of age. For the other age groups—all those being 21 years and more, considered in Germany as adults—the same property incentives were given to

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<sup>54</sup> M. von Hippel, *Lista de los colonos que han llegado con la primera expedición alemana a Yucatán el 23 de octubre 1865*, Mérida, May 22, 1866, AGEY, Poder Ejecutivo (hereafter cited as PE), c. 159.

singles and heads of family. This could have posed a challenge in terms of having such large tracts, as committed on the contract, to assign to all of them in nearby, urban, areas.

Now just some observations about the colonists' age distribution: It is timely to remember that in the Yucatecan newspaper emphasis was given to the utilitarian aspects of migration, in which the "hard working and efficient [German settlers arrived] to cultivate the land, to rescue Yucatán from the decadence and stagnation brought about by the Caste War."<sup>55</sup> For the peninsula, according to the regime, the arrival of the Villa Carlotans meant a labor force of 267 people,<sup>56</sup> meaning all those being 10 years of age and older. The large number of children was presented as a plus: The minors were to be treated with special care so that they would become "children of Yucatán, not only in moral sense", but because of the emotional ties they were expected to develop towards the receiving society.<sup>57</sup>

Another noticeable characteristic of the group is that the number of men, 243, is almost 1/4 higher than that of women, which adds only to 198. This could be explained partly by the number of male singles joining the colony. In 1865, there were 44 families—with a total of 105 children—and 32 singles recruited.<sup>58</sup> Even though for 1866 the official newspaper reported the arrival of 49 families and no unmarried adults,<sup>59</sup> that breakdown seems inaccurate when compared against other documents. The media discourse about the colonists emphasized a preference for families, these being considered as having a better chance for assimilation into the receiving society.<sup>60</sup> Despite this declared goal, many unmarried adults were admitted into Villa Carlota. Probably because of the importance given to miscegenation during the Second Empire, that was not positioned as a problem: At least not initially. Another possible explanation could be that single males were seen as an added value for defense purposes, which, as one should recall, were part of the duties adjudged to the settlements. In practice, while some of the single males quickly relocated into Mérida, and several others ran away breaching their contracts, the few

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<sup>55</sup> Importante, *PoDY*, Oct. 25, 1865, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> From a total of 443.

<sup>57</sup> Importante, *PoDY*, Oct. 15, 1865.

<sup>58</sup> Colonos, *ibidem*, Oct. 27, 1865.

<sup>59</sup> Noticias de Yucatán, *DI*, July 31, 1866.

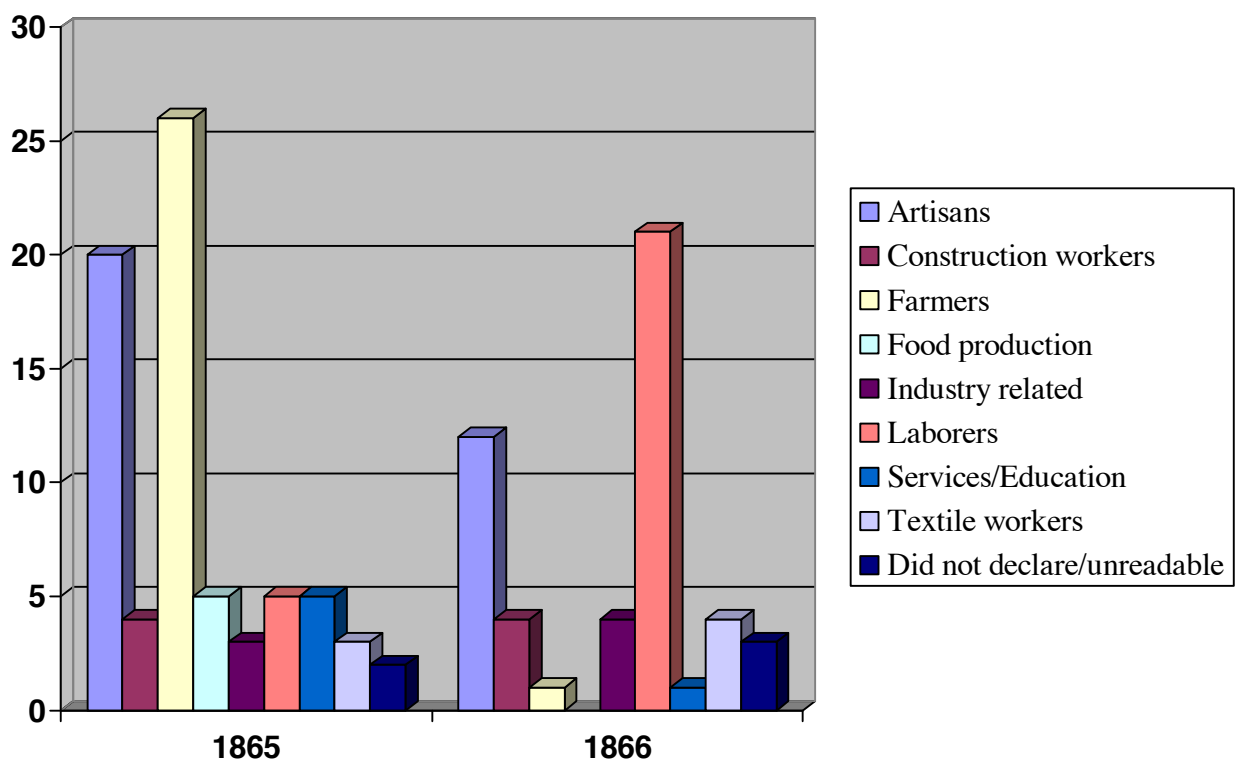
<sup>60</sup> The study of return-patterns in German overseas migration to Latin America in the nineteenth century shows that an almost equal number of males and females in family groups is characteristic for permanent migration and that, on the contrary, single immigrants have a higher chance of not settling permanently in the receiving country. See KAMPHOEFNER 1999, p. 39.

women who remained in Yucatán after the collapse of the colony were those who married locals.<sup>61</sup>

## 2. Occupations of the Colonists of Villa Carlota

Based on the colonization plan for the peninsula, von Hippel was to sign up on behalf of the Mexican Empire in 1865—on what was considered to be the first of a series of trips to Europe—600 German families of farmers and artisans.<sup>62</sup> It does not seem that the question of whether the goal was realistic or feasible was ever asked. Especially in light of the governmental ban on advertising the project, what were indeed the results of the recruitment efforts in terms of occupations of the settlers?

**Figure 3: Declared Occupations of the Colonists of Villa Carlota**



<sup>61</sup> These cases will be presented in Chapter IV.

<sup>62</sup> Salazar Ilarregui to Charlotte, Isla del Carmen, Dec. 19, 1865, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989, pp. 354-355. In contrast, the Yucatecan media—perhaps in light of the elite's rejection of the project—reported that the intention was to enroll only 500 families. Cf. Colonos, *PoDY*, Oct. 27, 1865.

Figure 3 shows the professional profile of the Villa Carlotans based on the occupation they declared when leaving Hamburg. Both groups, 1865 and 1866, are here included. Only the heads of family and male singles registered an occupation, that is 123, from which in five cases no information was provided or the entry was unreadable. The workable data, then, adds to 118 entries, in which more than two dozen different professions were given. In order to analyze the information in this thesis, the occupations were grouped under eight categories, which will be here explained. To preserve the meaning implied in the job descriptions at that time in Germany, the professions are here listed as they were written in the Hamburg passengers' lists. When the writing is unclear, a question mark has been set in brackets next to it.

- a) Artisans.- Here were included people declaring to be *Tischler*, *Uhrmacher*, *Schuhmacher*, *Barbier*, *Gerber*, *Schneider*, *Färber*, *Messerschmied*, *Schlosser*, *Zigarrenmacher*, *Schmied*, *Riemer*[], *Dreher* or *Schornsteinfeger*. With 32 people in total, this was one of the largest groups representing 27.1%. From this group, 20 people emigrated in 1865 and the rest in 1866.
- b) Construction workers.- Comprises *Zimmermänner* und *Maurer*. This category, although reaching only 6.7% of the whole, is difficult to justify when considering the extreme difference between the construction techniques and requirements in Northeast Germany and Yucatán. Nevertheless, only eight of them migrated in total.
- c) Farmers.- Here were only *Landmänner* and one *Gärtner* included, and they represented 22.8%. In the 1865 group there were 26 of them, and only one more came in 1866. Nevertheless, this category could turn out to be larger, especially for the 1866-group, depending on what was meant under the title *Arbeiter*, an issue to be discussed ahead. In either case, this group was of major importance for the Yucatecan colonization program of the Empire, which envisioned Villa Carlota as farming settlements. Germany's agricultural technology was very much appreciated in México, and the Yucatecan newspapers in particular emphasized that the settlers would dedicate themselves to grow different crops commercially.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Mejoras Positivas, *PoDM*, Nov. 14, 1864; Importante, *PoDY*, Oct. 25, 1865; Colonos, *ibidem*, Nov. 3, 1865. The aspect of commercial farming, in opposition to subsistence agriculture, was emphasized in both political and media discourse.



- d) Food production.- All five people in this category—encompassing one *Bäcker*, two *Brauer* and two *Schlachter*—emigrated into Yucatán in 1865. Besides providing the colonists with a minimum of nutritional items, there was the intention to start a beer brewery and a cookies factory in the Santa Elena location.<sup>64</sup> They represented nevertheless the smallest group, only 4.2% of the total.
- e) Industry related.- There were seven people, that is 5.9% of the whole, in this category: One *Maschinist*, and six *Bergmänner*. Considering that there are no mines in Yucatán, it is not possible to understand what was to be the function of those colonists in Villa Carlota.
- f) Laborers.- In the Hamburg boarding lists, five people in 1865, and 21 in 1866, registered their work as that of an *Arbeiter*. At that time in Germany, it could have meant that the people were *Tagelöhner*—day laborers—or seasonal workers, which would make sense considering that both of Villa Carlota's sites were to be in first line dedicated to agriculture. But the possibility that some of the *Arbeiter* could have been industrial workers can at this point not be dismissed. In any case, this group makes up 22% of the total.
- g) Service/Education.- Two *Stallm[eister?]*, two people identifying themselves as *Händler*, and one as *Diener* joined Villa Carlota in 1865. Representing only 5%, this was a very small group. The last two of these job descriptions are ambiguous. Evidence has been found that one of the people registered as *Händler*, Carl Immanuel Berger, took over some representative functions for the colonists as they arrived in Yucatán, working later as a carpenter in the Santa Elena settlement.<sup>65</sup> A *Schulmeister*, a single named Wilhelm Henning, arrived in 1866 to Yucatán, but actually ran away from the colony rather quickly, never serving as a teacher.<sup>66</sup>
- h) Textile workers.- Three *Weber* arrived in 1865, and another four the following year. This category comprised only 5.9% of the total.

<sup>64</sup> Juan Julián Ortegón, Priest of Ticul, to Pedro M. Guerra Castillo, Secretario de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán (hereafter cited as Ortegón and Guerra respectively), Ticul, Nov. 12, 1865, Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán, Oficios, (hereafter cited as AHAY), vol. 40, 1866-1867.

<sup>65</sup> Colonos, *PoDY*, Nov. 3, 1865; M. von Hippel, Mérida, May 22, 1866, Lista de los colonos [...], AGEY, PE, c. 159. The role of Carlos Berger has been erroneously represented in MENÉNDEZ GONZÁLEZ (1937, p. 387), as well as in DICCIONARIO PORRÚA [...] 1996, vol. 3, s.v. Schoot [sic], Arturo, p. 2699.

<sup>66</sup> Von Hippel to the Imperial Commissioner, Mérida, July 23, 1866, AGEY, PE, c. 157.

After this overview of the wide spectrum of jobs declared by the colonists, a few observations are pertinent.

- Even though some workers who could be considered useful for the organization of the colonies were signed up, in 1865 there was neither a school teacher nor a clergymen, a situation rather unfortunate given the large amount of children, the rural settings of Villa Carlota and the fact that many colonists were Protestant.<sup>67</sup>
- In the formation of most German settlements in South America a doctor was considered indispensable. The boarding lists of Villa Carlota do not show one. Nevertheless, the 32 year old colonist Herrmann Beiswenger, who registered having the occupation of a *Diener*, is shown as a medical doctor by von Hippel in another official document in Yucatán a few months later.<sup>68</sup> Although this settler perhaps had some kind of nursing training or knowledge, the discrepancy could be evidence of an attempt to portray the selection of the settlers as more thoughtful or successful than it indeed was.
- On May 22, 1866, von Hippel prepared a list of the first group of colonizers who arrived in 1865 for the Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán.<sup>69</sup> This information was sent to Empress Charlotte in May 1866, as part of a status report.<sup>70</sup> On it, many entries show different information when compared to the lists made in Hamburg. Besides the somewhat expected Hispanicization of names, some job descriptions underwent changes, showing a slightly larger number of farmers, which could be interpreted as an adaptation strategy on part of the colonists to the conditions encountered in the society of reception, meaning that they undertook the function of farmers because that was needed. But the possibility that the information was manipulated once in Yucatán in an attempt to show on paper a larger agricultural force than was actually recruited can not be disregarded at this point.
- As per the colonist's declarations, they were expecting to be able to cultivate cotton, which could justify the immigration of the textile and the industry related workers.

<sup>67</sup> Ortegón to Guerra, Ticul, Nov. 23, 1865, AHAY, vol. 40, 1866-1867. Several documents—consulted both in Yucatecan and in German archives—show the interactions of the Protestant colonizers, the local population, and the Catholic Church representatives. These encounters would require a separate analysis. Given the extension and objectives of this thesis, they can be here but briefly mentioned.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. M. von Hippel, Mérida, May 22, 1866, Lista de los colonos [...], AGEY, PE, c. 159; StAH 1865.

<sup>69</sup> M. von Hippel, Mérida, May 22, 1866, Lista de los colonos [...], AGEY, PE, c. 159.

<sup>70</sup> Domingo Bureau to Charlotte, Mérida, May 9, 1866, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989, p. 361.

This, and the settler's comments to the Catholic priest Juan Ortigón about planning a brewery and a cookie factory, show that there was interests of diversifying Villa Carlota—either by choice or by force, considering the difficulties faced by von Hippel in recruiting colonizers in Germany—into more than just farming settlements.

- Albeit the passengers' lists do not register the occupations of any of the women, Schott in his article refers to some of them as "*Acker- oder Fabrikmädchen*."<sup>71</sup> Likewise, official documents recorded later in Villa Carlota show that some women registered having an occupation, such as Bertha Patricia Sellar, who as a 13 year old arrived in 1865 in Santa Elena, and years later, when getting married to a local man, Lorenzo Castillo, declared herself a seamstress.<sup>72</sup>

In any event, even if with only a few hundred immigrants instead of a few thousand, probably with fewer families and more singles than wished for, and with less farmers and artisans than expected, von Hippel left Hamburg on September 2, 1865 on board of the steam boat "*Germania*,"<sup>73</sup> bound for New York, to from there proceed down to Yucatán. Previously, he had sent out from Hamburg the first group of Villa Carlotans on the 24 of August onboard the "*San Luis*." This sailing vessel was chartered by von Hippel specially for taking the colonists to the port of Sisal, Yucatán.<sup>74</sup> Usually running the Rio de Janeiro-London-Hamburg route,<sup>75</sup> the "*San Luis*" was a small cargo ship with a built-in area for passengers, a *Zwischendeck*, where probably many of the inconveniences and unhealthy environment attributed to most vessels of such characteristics prevailed.<sup>76</sup> At the point of departure the weather conditions were favorable, and the "*San Luis*" was able to reach open sea on August 26, 1865.<sup>77</sup> After sixty days of travel—in which three babies died and eight were born—the colonists arrived on October 25 to Sisal.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>71</sup> SCHOTT 1866, p. 474.

<sup>72</sup> Lorenzo Castillo and Patricia Selar [sic], AGEY, Registro Civil, (hereafter cited as RC), Libro de Matrimonios de Santa Elena 1867-1868, Nov. 10, 1868.

<sup>73</sup> StAH 1865; Cuenta de M. von Hippel, in Yucatán, por gastos del "*San Luis*," for \$25,502.00, Captain Reimer, Hamburg, May 17, 1866, CAIHY, Recibos de la Comisión Científica, LV, 1866, 4/4, 023.

<sup>74</sup> The contractor and travel arrangements would be repeated in 1866 to take the second group of Villa Carlotans to the Port of Sisal: AAz, Sept. 14, 1866.

<sup>75</sup> Schiffsnachrichten, San Luis, *ibidem*, Mar. 19, 1864.

<sup>76</sup> The conditions under which emigrants traveled in the *Zwischendeck* of some of those mass transportation ships are presented in GÜNTHER 2005, pp. 142- 200.

<sup>77</sup> AAz, Sept. 14, 1864, p. 147.

<sup>78</sup> Colonos, *PoDY*, Oct. 2, 1865; SCHOTT 1866, p. 470.

In summary, what does the information presented and analyzed in this chapter show about the Villa Carlotans? A diverse group of people of all ages, possessing a wide range of skills. Even though the majority of the people seem to have had a rural origin, being mostly artisans and farmers, this was by no means a homogeneous, closed, group. If that diversity could have brought with itself some adjustment, conflict and negotiation, the group probably also shared enough socio-cultural elements in common to overcome these problems, given that the majority of the colonizers came from two specific geographical areas, namely Schlessien and Anhalt, as already mentioned. These characteristics pretty much correspond to those of other German agrarian settlements in Latin America at that time.

Carefully considering the profile of the colonists, it could be said that they had the potential of contributing to their receiving society. Whether the land and weather conditions in which they settled were appropriate—and the sociopolitical circumstances conducive or not to benefit from their knowledge—is a separate question, which will be considered in Chapter IV.

And what could be concluded about the recruitment and selection process of the colonists? That even if showing some shortcomings by the selection of professions, there was some planning, thought and effort involved by forming Villa Carlota.<sup>79</sup> This control exercised by the Mexican State should by no means be taken for granted: In previous cases, such as the farming colony with French families in the Coatzacoalcos area in the 1820's, it was afterwards determined that some of the people recruited "were unfit for working in the fields,"<sup>80</sup> meaning that some professionals and entrepreneurs were enrolled, and some of them even brought their own servants along.

Until this point the prevailing ideas in the literature about colonization under the Second Empire are that "el proyecto y la ejecución [de las colonias] están en una absoluta desproporción ... los proyectos no son bien estudiados ... nadie organiza ayuda para los colonizadores."<sup>81</sup> Perhaps in light of the new evidence presented in the Villa Carlota case a reconsideration of these assumptions is called for.

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<sup>79</sup> This pattern of control on part of the State by the selection of immigrants in light of a colonization policy whose objective was to populate isolated areas has been observed by the German colonization of Chile. See: WALDMANN 1988, pp. 438, 440-441.

<sup>80</sup> BERNINGER 1974, p. 72.

<sup>81</sup> BOPP 1965, p. 260 [T: There were many plans, but not an organized execution of them ... the projects were poorly studied ... no one organized help for the colonists].

#### IV. The "Colonias Alemanas en Yucatán"

As heretofore shown, the Second Mexican Empire considered foreign migration as one of the pillars upon which it should build its existence. France's policy set the goal of attracting 600,000 immigrants in five years. It was expected that the colonists would regenerate Mexico, put an end to the civil war and protect the country against North American expansionism. Additionally, the foreigners were assigned the functions of educating the rural population and inducing a development in all areas of the economy. These disparate goals were more or less shared by the moderate and liberal Mexican elite, but still looked at with suspicion by the Conservatives.

Salazar Ilarregui had begun to develop a project to colonize Yucatán with German-speaking people since his time as Minister of Fomento, and carried it out with *carte blanche* as Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán. Notwithstanding the support of the Yucatecan elite to the Monarchy, the businessmen were not interested in having colonists, preferring instead laborers. Disregarding this opposition, Salazar Ilarregui moved forward with the project: 443 colonists were recruited, and a location for the first settlement was selected. This being the ideology behind the colonization program, how did the execution of the "Colonias alemanas en Yucatán" plan proceed in practice? Several versions have been proposed:

Die Bauernfamilien landeten mit Sack und Pack in Yukatan, aber weder Hiller noch die kaiserliche Regierung hatte irgendwelche Vorbereitungen zur Aufnahme der Kolonisten getroffen. Sie wurden an Land gesetzt und nach Santa Elena, einem kleinen trostlosen Indianerdorf, geführt, wo sich dann kein Mensch mehr um ihr weiteres Schicksal kümmerte.<sup>1</sup>

The written information about the immigrants seems to end with their arrival at Santa Elena.<sup>2</sup>

The colonists stayed only briefly in town. They were constantly harassed by the Indians, who forced them to go away.<sup>3</sup>

German immigration has been tried ... [in Yucatán] ... it failed because of its physical inadaptability ... ambition ... expensiveness and unreliability ... [because of the colonists'] ... unwillingness to mix themselves with the indigenous population.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PFERDEKAMP 1958, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> MEDINA UN 2001, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> MÁRQUEZ MORFÍN 1985, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Pedro REGIL Y PEÓN, Manuel DONDE y José GARCÍA MORALES, Mérida, 1878, Informe que presenta al Gobierno del Estado de Yucatan la Comision que suscribe [...], printed in full by Emiliano BUSTO, 1880, in:

Assertions of this nature represent the typical discourse about Villa Carlota. The first one, alleging that the colonists were abandoned since their arrival, was made based only on second hand accounts. The second one, by consulting exclusively regional secondary literature. The third assumption repeats two myths still very much embedded in the official interpretation of Yucatán's history: The one about the "wild, hostile" Maya, and the myth of a patriotic, active and unanimous rejection of the Second Empire.<sup>5</sup> The fourth quotation represents the selectively distorted account of some members of the Yucatecan elite, whose agenda was, first, to disguise their participation during the Empire, and second, to lobby in favor of the introduction of indentured laborers for their henequen plantations.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter presents an attempt to sketch the life and fall of Villa Carlota by using primary and secondary sources. The objective of this effort is to understand how the program was carried out and to identify some of the factors contributing to its collapse.

### A. The Establishment of the First Settlement

Contrary to what is now normally heard about a general animosity against foreigners in México, the accounts about the arrival of the first group of German colonists to Yucatán on October 23, 1865, painted a positive reception. If that is to be expected from the official Yucatecan newspaper,<sup>7</sup> it isn't necessarily so from Schott's essay in *Das Ausland*, which was supposed to be an ethno-historical report: Albeit providing some interesting insights, a clear bias in favor of the Second Empire and its projects is reflected, which could be tracked back to the fact that Schott was on the Monarchy's payroll. He narrates that the Germans were "wie eine himmlische Sendung willkommen" by both authorities and locals

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*Estadística de la República Mexicana. Estado que guardan la agricultura, industria, minería y comercio [...]*, vol. 3 (México: Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido), pp. 261-269, here 266. About the collaboration of Pedro Regil y Peón and José García Morales with the Second Empire, see CANTO MAYÉN 2006, *passim*; SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, *passim*. Even though Hernán MENÉNDEZ RODRÍGUEZ, 1995, *Iglesia y Poder: Proyectos sociales, alianzas políticas y económicas en Yucatán, 1857-1917* (México: Nuestra América), pp. 57-58, reports finding no evidence of Manuel Dondé's cooperation with the Monarchical regime in Yucatán, there are several records identifying him as member of a commission, see for example: Sesiones del cabildo de Mérida, CAIHY, 1864, 1/3, 026.

<sup>5</sup> Two works have challenged the "Yucatán vs. the Second Empire" myth. See: SANCHEZ NOVELO 1983; CANTO MAYÉN 2006.

<sup>6</sup> A few authors have stated that from 1876 until 1911 only immigration of indentured laborers was promoted by the elite in Yucatán, sometimes using as an argument the allegedly negative experience had with the German colonists. See: Antonio Manuel ALAMILLA FUENTES y Tomás Emilio PELLICER LARREA, 1994, *El Cosmopolitismo de los común y corrientes: La Inmigración a Yucatán durante el Porfiriato* (Thesis: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán), *passim*; GONZÁLEZ NAVARRO 1979, pp. 209-210; Nidia VICTORIA G., 1984, Colonización e importación de trabajadores, Yucatán 1865-1910, in: *Boletín de la Escuela de Ciencias de la Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán*, no. 11:66, pp. 23-32, and *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> See Importante, *PoDY*, Oct. 25, 1865; Colonos, *ibidem*, Oct. 27, 1865.

in Sisal<sup>8</sup> and, a few days later, in Mérida.<sup>9</sup> Schott reports that the settlers were, to their own surprise, warmly received, provided with food and shelter, efficiently transported to the capital of the state, and all the time treated with friendliness and consideration.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of the fact that the national public opinion was already turning adverse to foreign immigration, the arrival of the Germans was flaunted also in *L'Estafette*, in México City, and in the *Moniteur*, in France, as a proof that European colonization was possible.<sup>11</sup> But although the news was spread around, the newspapers selectively skipped over four aspects. First, none of them mentioned that the number of immigrants was way below what was originally planned: As the correspondence between Empress Charlotte and José Salazar Ilarregui shows, the Imperial Commissioner wished to gain minimum another 250 families that same year, given that he wanted to recruit 600 and only 49 arrived.<sup>12</sup> The second and third gaps in the coverage have the same root in common: While in the Yucatecan press it was made clear that the immigrants were underprivileged Germans, whose travel and settling was being financed by the regime, the national press avoided altogether this issue; but the major silence was actually built around the issue of religion, meaning that no newspaper mentioned that some of the immigrants were Protestant. These selective omissions can be explained by taking into account that there was opposition to non-Catholic, non-selective, subsidized migration, so that most probably the Imperial officers intentionally avoided disclosing that information to the public.<sup>13</sup> The fourth and

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<sup>8</sup> The port of Sisal was described around the 1850's as one that "never grew beyond one long street crowded with wagons, oxen, mules, whorehouses, and cantinas, and ending at the wharf and customs house, with a little fort protection—all of this built on a sand bar surrounded by marshes," see REED 1964, p. 17. Sisal is only about 55 kilometers west of Mérida, but given the road conditions in those days, it was nevertheless a two day trip.

<sup>9</sup> SCHOTT 1866, pp. 473-474. Based on the documents I have analyzed: The trip Hamburg-Sisal took 60 days; from Sisal the colonists were first transported to Mérida, where they rested for some days; on Nov. 2, 1865, they left to the town of Ticul, where they arrived on Nov. 5; a week later they were already in Santa Elena. The dates published in MENÉNDEZ GONZÁLEZ 1937, p. 387 are incorrect.

<sup>10</sup> SCHOTT 1866, pp. 473-474. SÁNCHEZ NOVELO (1983, p. 124) affirms that the colonists received cash donations and free food from the meridianos.

<sup>11</sup> ARRANGOIZ 1974, p. 347; La colonia de Santa Elena, *PoDY*, Nov. 6, 1865; WECKMANN 1989, p. 346. It has been suggested that *L'Estafette* and the *Moniteur* although receiving governmental subsidies and having among their objectives to support the programs of the Empire, were indeed at times critical of the regime's immigration policies, see HANNA and HANNA 1947.

<sup>12</sup> Salazar Ilarregui to Charlotte, Isla del Carmen, Dec. 19, 1865, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989, pp. 354-355. This is actually an answer to Charlotte's question as if Salazar Ilarregui alone could manage to attract enough colonists for the whole peninsula or whether Commodore Matthew F. Maury, Imperial Minister of Colonization, should be asked to help by bringing Confederate refugees to Yucatán. Salazar Ilarregui declined receiving help, since he had developed and carried out the Yucatecan project by himself. See *ibidem*, p. 354.

<sup>13</sup> HANNA and HANNA 1971, pp. 67, 206-208.

last aspect left out were the difficulties the colonists faced to get settled in Santa Elena, where indeed little had been prepared beforehand to receive them. No wonder, considering that it wasn't until October 25 that the decision to establish the Germans in Santa Elena was taken, after the two previously considered locations, Tzucacab and Becanchén were discarded.

### 1. Santa Elena, the Old Nohcacab

As mentioned before, Santa Elena apparently offered some of the conditions that the Second Empire in Yucatán defined as decisive for the settlement of foreign immigrants. First, there were enough lots immediately available for the Germans to settle within the area of an existing village, which should give plenty of opportunities to miscegenation and the so much desired "knowledge transfer." Second, the vast majority of the population of Santa Elena was Maya humble *campesinos* with only a few moderately semi-prosperous Hispanics living there; this socioeconomic profile fitted well the regime's intention not "die von Geldsäcken abhängige Classe zu vermehren," but to contribute through foreign colonization to a "Verstärkung einer betriebsamen und unabhängigen Mittelclasse."<sup>14</sup> Third, the pacifying mission of the settlement could be fulfilled by its location between Mérida and the cruzoob area. As fourth, from an economical point of view it sounded promising that a small, deprived, interior community which had lost many of its inhabitants and most of its income could be jump-started: True that the town was almost destroyed, but the Germans would rebuild it, so it was probably thought. As fifth possible advantage was that even though the village was at the moment isolated, a road connecting it to Mérida had already begun to be constructed, which should allow for a quick and inexpensive transportation of the colonists' produce and merchandise to the capital.<sup>15</sup>

But one could say that all the above-mentioned positive aspects would have to be considered insufficient if the location was inappropriate for large agricultural production, or if the area was so unsafe or adverse to the wellbeing of the colonists that it could jeopardize the government's investment. Based on documental evidence, it appears that these two drawbacks were not identified at all, discarded, or unclearly communicated by

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<sup>14</sup> SCHOTT 1866, p. 474.

<sup>15</sup> F. Carrillo to the Road Construction's Inspector of Ticul, Mérida, Nov. 15, 1864, AGEY, M-T, c. 15. As per the content of this document, some landowners were opposed to the construction of this road connecting the south Chenes area to the north with Santa Elena, Uxmal, Muna, Abalá y Mérida, delaying its completion.



the specialists responsible for scouting, testing and selecting the location. In the opinion of Hübbe and Schott, the land was appropriate for agricultural production at commercial level, and the weather and health conditions tolerable for Europeans.<sup>16</sup> What led these officials to come to that conclusion? How was Santa Elena when the Germans arrived?

The old Nohcacab was around the middle of the nineteenth century renamed as Santa Elena.<sup>17</sup> The location had been already inhabited during the Maya Classic period (300-1000 A.C.). During the Colony it was an *encomienda*, meaning a tribute-paying small community, with an ethnically mixed population: There were Spanish, criollos, mestizos and mulattos.<sup>18</sup> It was a relatively compact town with streets in a grid pattern built around a central area marked by the church, the main square, official buildings and a large well.<sup>19</sup> Most of the masonry houses, inhabited by the Hispanic elite, the *familias principales*, were in downtown. The typical Maya houses built out of temporary materials were found beyond the central area, where the rest of the population, mostly poor people, lived.

John Lloyd Stephens, considered one of the founders of the Maya studies, made Santa Elena the departure point of several of his trips in the area. Along with his two companions, Frederick Catherwood and Dr. Cabot, he stayed there for several days in the early 1840's. Even if with a slight tendency to orientalize<sup>20</sup> their representations, it is thanks to these explorers that we have gotten not only detailed accounts about Santa Elena, its people and culture, but also drawings. Stephens described the town as a very poor, sad, isolated, predominantly Maya enclave with around 6,000 inhabitants, where "many of the white people could not speak Spanish, and the conversation was almost exclusively in the

<sup>16</sup> Colonos, *PoDY*, Nov. 3, 1865.

<sup>17</sup> It is difficult to determine the exact year given that in literature and documents both names are used indistinctively. According to a local legend, which is also in Santa Elena's webpage, the village was renamed as Santa Elena in 1847, when the town was burned down for a second time. However, those assaults appear to have happened in 1849. See MOLINA SOLÍS 1921, p. 199; Memoria estadística comparativa de los pueblos de Chapat, Sacalum, Mama y Santa Elena, May 12, 1864, AGEY, M-T, c. 11, v. 15, e. 3 y 4.

<sup>18</sup> Arturo GÜEMEZ PINEDA, 1997, The Rebellion of Nohcacab: Unpublished Preface to the Caste War, *Saastun. Maya Culture Review*, no. 2, pp. 51-79, here p. 54. See also Joaquín de ARRIGUNAGA PEÓN, 1982, *Demography and Parish Affairs in Yucatan, 1797-1891, Documents from the [...]* (Eugene: University of Oregon Anthropological Papers), pp. 254, 255. Additionally, for a well thought and documented introduction to the life in nineteenth-century rural Yucatán, see: Terry RUGELEY, 2001, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), pp. 3-16.

<sup>19</sup> The city distribution has not changed much until our days. For a description of general layouts, see Alfonso VILLA ROJAS, 1985, *Estudios etnológicos: los mayas* (México: UNAM), p. 91.

<sup>20</sup> Term created by Said to designate a western ideology tending to romanticize and exoticize non-western cultures. See Edward W. SAID, 2003 [1978], *Orientalism* (London: Penguin).

Maya language."<sup>21</sup> However, speaking Maya was not really an exception but almost the norm among rural communities during that time.<sup>22</sup>



Figure 4. Street in the Village of Nohcacab in 1841, by Frederick Catherwood.

Source: STEPHENS 1963, vol. 1, p. 224.

The situation had however in some aspects changed by the time the German colonists arrived. As a result of an indigenous revolt in April of 1843,<sup>23</sup> the Caste War and three yellow fever epidemics, the village had been reduced down to not even 1/3 of its human and economic resources,<sup>24</sup> and large numbers of the Hispanic inhabitants had left. But, on the other hand, poor refugees from other Maya villages attempting to escape the cruozob

<sup>21</sup> John Lloyd STEPHENS, 1963 [1843], *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications), pp. 202, 231.

<sup>22</sup> GABBERT 2004, pp. 21, 77.

<sup>23</sup> During this insurrection, some Maya of Nohcacab and Tixhualtún attacked and plundered the Uxmal and Chetulix haciendas, killing several people. See GÜEMEZ PINEDA 1997.

<sup>24</sup> There are major discrepancies between the information provided by the local authorities of Santa Elena and that distributed by the Imperial officers. According to the descriptions prepared in 1865 by General Uraga for Empress Charlotte, Santa Elena was a "burned down town, with 250 inhabitants, which is now a German colony." General Uraga, *Intinerario(s) para el viaje de la emperatriz, de Mérida a Campeche*, O. ca, Dec., 1865, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989, p. 214. This divergence could be interpreted as misinformation, but could also be read as an excuse for not including a visit to the village in Charlotte's itinerary in 1865. The Empress did not stop in Santa Elena, although she was close by. The most probable reason being, in my opinion, that the conditions in the colony were still chaotic.

attacks had come to live in Santa Elena, which meant that the village was not as homogeneous as it might have appeared at first sight.

Administratively, the inhabitants of this rural area were classified as *naturales* (people born in Santa Elena) and *vecinos* (residents), but one should not interpret that as if there was no ethnic and social distance.<sup>25</sup> Although culturally most inhabitants shared common values, mythology, material culture, beliefs and a syncretized form of Catholicism, there were other differences. A political and economic clique of around a dozen merchants and landowners in Santa Elena, all them having a Hispanic patronymics, seems to have exercised control of most political and economic aspects of the village.<sup>26</sup> For several decades this rural elite had occupied official positions, owned considerable tracts, had a certain control over the labor and the contribution of the villagers and kept itself pretty much as a closed group. They intermarried and served as witnesses to each other in all legal matters, even though they had their occasional disputes and differences, which sometimes ended up in criminal cases filed in Mérida.

One of the reasons why the rural elite could monopolize the administrative functions of the village is probably that some of the requisites to hold office were to be able to write and read Spanish and to be a taxpayer, and only a few people fulfilled those qualifications. Contrary, the underprivileged population, formed by some Hispanics and a majority of indígenas, were poor *milperos*, spoke perhaps a little Spanish but could not write it or read it, and did not occupy positions in the village's administration. The ethnic boundaries do not seem to have been so distinct among this last group, given that people of Spanish and Maya patronymics were in many cases related by marriage and descent, signaling strong horizontal kinship relationships. Nevertheless, this underprivileged population was not homogeneous. They were independent campesinos who practiced subsistence agriculture mostly in communal plots; *aparceros*, people who not having enough communal land, rented plots from *ranchos* or *sitios*; and a few *peones*, farm laborers of close by ranches. Cash-crop income was in any case very limited.

The Maya of Yucatán have never been aware of belonging to an ethnic group, identifying themselves instead as belonging to a village and as campesinos, and naming all

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<sup>25</sup> These were the two administrative categories existing in Santa Elena those days.

<sup>26</sup> No socio-historical research about Santa Elena has been carried until now. This reconstruction attempt is made based on official documents from the years 1850 to 1889 I have consulted in Yucatecan Archives.

others as *ts'ul*, or foreigners.<sup>27</sup> This identification of the "us" as villagers and *labradores*, as well as of the "other" appears to have also been experience in Santa Elena even before the arrival of the German colonists. Nevertheless, that does not necessarily imply that the *ts'ul* were rejected. Here it is important to recall that neither B. M. Norman<sup>28</sup> nor Stephens reported hostility from the locals. This last one actually found the people of Santa Elena curious and friendly, even if the *indígenas*, he thought, were somewhat noisy and showed a tendency to drink alcohol heavily.<sup>29</sup>

A problem that would indeed remain the same as in the 1840's is Santa Elena's scarcity of water. Already at that time, Stephens remarked:

Nohcacab has three public wells, and it has a population of about 6,000 entirely dependent up on them. Two of these wells are called *norias*, being larger and more considerable structures, in which the water is drawn by mules, and the third is simply a *poso*, or well, having merely a cross-beam over the mouth, at which each comer draws with his own bucket and rope. For leagues around there is no water except that furnished by these wells.<sup>30</sup>

The area is formed out of a deep and extensive cover of limestone, shows high temperatures, lacks surface water, and has a long dry season extending from November until April or May.<sup>31</sup> Besides the wells, the only access to water is in a few caves usually difficult, sometimes even dangerous, to reach. During the nineteenth century, water was found at depths of 38 to 65 meters.<sup>32</sup> The soil of Santa Elena is classified by the Maya as *kankab* (fertile). However, in spite of its richness in quality, it is only to be found in a thin layer and in the pockets of the limestone, which inhibits the cultivation of a large variety of crops, of large land extensions, and the use of a plow.<sup>33</sup> These environmental conditions have led the people of the Santa Elena area to practice a traditional slash-and-burn

<sup>27</sup> Henri FRAVRE, 1984 [1971], *Cambio y continuidad entre los Mayas de México. Contribución [...]* (México: INI), pp. 139, 145-148; Matthew RESTALL, 1997, *The Maya World. Yucatecan Culture and Society, 1550-1850* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), pp. 15-16; GABBERT 2004, pp. 31-33.

<sup>28</sup> B.M. NORMAN, 1843, *Rambles in Yucatan, or notes of travel [...]* (New York: Langley), pp. 153-154.

<sup>29</sup> STEPHENS 1963, esp. Chap. XIV and XV. It is interesting that this author did not seem to have perceived the mulatto population in Santa Elena.

<sup>30</sup> STEPHENS 1963, p. 204. A league (*legua*) is about 4.3 kilometer.

<sup>31</sup> Nicholas P. DUNNING, 1992, *Lords of the Hills: Ancient Maya Settlement in the Puuc Region, Yucatán, Mexico* (Madison: Prehistory Press), pp. 13, 24-25.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p.21.

<sup>33</sup> STEPHENS 1963, p. 137.

agriculture<sup>34</sup> and limited their crop production to a few products. All this information has been common local knowledge for centuries. Granted, it wasn't perhaps known or understood by outsiders, who commonly assumed that the indígenas were just lazy and ignorant, resisted modernization and had no ambitions. Nevertheless, a geologist and an engineer were commissioned to choose the location for the colony and test the land for large scale cultivation of henequen, tobacco and cotton. Such visually arresting limestone formations as there are to be found in Santa Elena and the nature of the soil of Yucatán could not have easily passed unnoticed.

Contrary to what one would expect from a geologist, Schott appears to have taken at face value the meridianos' idea that due to the Caste War "der reichste und fruchtbarste Theil Yucatans, der Süden und Osten als Wüste liegen blieb."<sup>35</sup> Santa Elena, being located in the south and looking like a ghost town, probably only needed Europeans who knew how to make the land productive, so the contemporary thinking went. Separately from the availability of land and its strategic position close to the edge of the rebel-held territory, was agricultural cultivation possible, especially considering the absence of surface water? If the idea was to produce corn, beans, squash, chilies and watermelons enough for a family to consume, yes. But not for the agricultural products the Germans were expected to cultivate at commercial level. Insofar as the documental evidence shows, this incompatibility was not addressed. Some of the consequences of selecting Santa Elena as a location for the colony will be analyzed ahead.

## 2. Beginnings

As the Germans had already arrived to Yucatán, it was rashly ordered to prepare Santa Elena to receive the colonists. The Prefecto Político sent an order to the Subprefecto de Ticul and the Juez de Paz of Santa Elena to urgently built south of the church two large square sheds, 10 varas per side each; to prepare the public buildings and vacant houses of that village to serve as temporary shelter for the Germans; to re-habilitate the two unused wells—which were damaged during the 1849 cruzoob assaults and, given the lack of funds,

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<sup>34</sup> A description of this technique, still practiced until our days in Santa Elena and in large parts of the peninsula, can be found in VILLA ROJAS 1985, pp. 208-209.

<sup>35</sup> SCHOTT 1866, p. 472. Here he refers to the state of Yucatán.

left unfixed until then—and to hire workers for the construction of 70 houses, which should be ready as soon as possible.<sup>36</sup>

Dozens of memorandums deposited in the Archivo General de Yucatán document the efforts made to receive the Germans: Locals were hired; many *hidalgos* (Maya auxiliary military corps) were reassigned to Santa Elena, workers were recruited in close by areas; contracts and arrangements with some powerful hacendados, such as Felipe Peón, were made to buy and transport the necessary material; tens of thousands of palm leaves and hundreds of wood beams were ordered and submitted.<sup>37</sup> Not an easy enterprise, considering that only narrow footpaths led to the village, that the crucoob were threatening the zone making it unsafe, and that in the area just a few carriages for rent were available.

By November 12, the Germans had been already conducted to Santa Elena by a group formed by some of the most prominent men of Ticul, which may be interpreted as a sign of acceptance on part of the district authorities. Among this group was the *padre* Juan Julián Ortigón, Catholic priest of the parish of Ticul, and who's until now not consulted correspondence includes information about the German colonists. On his first report to his superiors in which he writes about the Germans, he described that the colonists both in Ticul as well as in Santa Elena were "well, festively received and fraternally treated."<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, he did not mention that in the village, house construction was far away from being completed: In spite of all efforts, only five of the necessary houses were ready, as per a complaint from von Hippel to the Imperial Commissioner.<sup>39</sup>

As it is to be expected, the official newspaper revealed no part of this tangle, probably to keep face and because the media's agenda had changed: On top of it then was the visit of Empress Charlotte to the peninsula, which took place from November 22 until December 11 of that same year.<sup>40</sup> During that period there were no printed news about the colony. The official newspaper just triumphantly announced later that since February 14, 1866, "the colonizers were properly settled in their own houses."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Mérida, Oct. 25, 1865, AGEY, M-T, c. 14, exp. 1 and 2. A vara was .84 meter.

<sup>37</sup> Evidence comes from AGEY, M-T, c. 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20, various dates and pages.

<sup>38</sup> Ortigón to Guerra, Ticul, Nov. 12, 1865, AHAY, vol. 40, 1866-1867.

<sup>39</sup> The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Mérida, Dec. 7, 1865, AGEY, M-T, c. 15. v. 20, e. 1. In this document it is stated that 77 houses were needed in total, and not 70 as originally requested.

<sup>40</sup> On Charlotte's visit to the peninsula, see for example SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, pp. 104-114; MOLINA SOLIS 1921, pp. 386-389; WECKMANN 1989, *passim*.

<sup>41</sup> Colonia de Santa Elena, *PoDY*, Mar. 2, 1866.

Analyzing the documents relating to this saga, four problems are clear. The first one being that the location was selected too late, bringing into question the effectiveness of those responsible of making a recommendation and taking a decision. Second, the inaccessibility of the location which, according to the authorities, would be resolved soon thanks to the new road. Third, the scarcity of local manpower, which probably also constituted a problem after the house construction phase, when the colonists needed orientation or help to start measuring, clearing and planting their tracts. And fourth, the reduced number of draft animals, which was due to historical and economical reasons: In Colonial times, only the Spanish and the criollos were allowed and could afford to own them; later, there was neither a tradition nor capital among the Maya to have them. This problematic was, however, clear for the Imperial Commissioner, who already in January, 1865 explained in a letter to Maximilian that Yucatán was so poor that in the whole state only a few of those animals—and allegedly of terrible quality—were available for rent, adding that even if the intention was to import large numbers of them, it would be difficult to feed them, given the dryness and poverty of the soil.<sup>42</sup> How is it that the government thought it possible to foster commercial production if even some of the basics, such as water, roads, some manpower, and draft animals, were not available in this part of Yucatán?

### 3. Organization and Daily Life

In studies concentrating on change and acculturation,<sup>43</sup> special emphasis is usually placed in identifying four basic indicators: The ability to speak the ethnic language, the extents to which the newcomers socialize with members of the receiving society, the generation of a self-identity in relation to the dominant culture, and whether the last two aspects lead to significant associations. Without attempting a full analysis of the acculturation process going on in Santa Elena, it will be productive for this reflection to highlight some of these aspects while reviewing how the colonization project was carried out.

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<sup>42</sup> Salazar Ilarregui to Maximilian, Mérida, Jan. 2, 1865, ÖSt, KMM, K. 18, fol. 63r, 68v.

<sup>43</sup> Defined as "culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental consequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors." SOCIAL SCIENCE Research Council, 1954, *Acculturation: An exploratory formulation*, *American Anthropologist*, no. 56, pp. 973-1002, here p. 974.

The existence of a German colony within an already formed village was surely not easy, but the documental evidence shows that it nevertheless brought some positive experiences. Santa Elena's highest authority was Desiderio Lizárraga, apparently the head of the political-economical clique in town, who as Juez de Paz handled all communications referring to the villagers with the authorities of Ticul. There was also a second Juez, Romano Negrón, and a substitute, Ramón Jiménez. The last two officers took over different assignments as required. As per many memorandums, these three men were in charge of the administrative, safety and military issues at local level. The Germans, however, depended for their part on von Hippel, who dealt directly with the Imperial Commissioner about all administrative issues relating to the colonists, such as expenses, delivery of food supplies, distribution of guns and ammunition, requests and permits, etc. As needed, Salazar Ilarregui expedited the corresponding orders to the state or district authorities on matters such as allocation of funds, relocation of colonists or arrest orders, as in the cases of people running away from the colony, for example.

This organization, sort of a structure within a structure, demanded cooperation from all parties involved, which was not always successful. Because von Hippel kept his residency in Mérida and only visited Villa Carlota regularly, he seems to have relied on one of the colonists, the Brazilian Carlos Young,<sup>44</sup> for the daily running of the settlement, as it is for example mentioned in some of padre Ortégón's letters. Young also served as one of the translators for the colonists on routine matters, especially towards the beginning. Documental evidence shows that as time went by the colonists did things on their own. For example, by civil registry matters in 1866 the colonists would present themselves directly to Santa Elena's local authorities, meaning most often Lizárraga, whose office was located on the south corner of the *palacio municipal* (the town hall), right across from the main square and the church. As many entries show, sometimes the Germans came accompanied by a Hispanic, but it was not rare that some women came alone, specially to register the death of small infants, some of which died during the cholera epidemic which attacked the area during the 1866 rainy season.<sup>45</sup> Analyzing the civil registry books, it is possible to see that a new legal and social identity was incorporated into the already existing categories of

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<sup>44</sup> His second last name was Waldemann. He was born in Brazil, probably from British and German immigrant parents, perhaps even colonists. This could have given Young some experience useful for Villa Carlota.

<sup>45</sup> The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Mérida, Jan. 8, 1866, AGEY, M-T, c. 16, vol. 2, e. 1; *idem* to *idem*, Mar. 3, 1866, *ibidem*; AGEY, RC, Libro de Defunciones de Santa Elena, 1866, various dates and entries.



vecino and natural: That of the colono. The registries relating to the Villa Carlota settlements follow often this formula: The person is identified as a "colono, natural de Alemania, que vive en la colonia, de función labrador."<sup>46</sup> This ethnic and socioeconomic definition accompanied the name of the person, which was preceded by a *don*, o *doña*, a respectful form of address reserved in those days for members of the elites. It is also important to notice that the Germans were not perceived as landowners or businessmen, but as *labradores*, as *campesinos*, which is how the locals referred to themselves too.<sup>47</sup>

Santa Elena, a village until then forgotten, started to see some improvements after the arrival of the colonists: Besides the wells being fixed up, in that same year of 1865 Salazar Ilarregui appointed a man named Escolástico Contreras as school teacher, giving him instructions to teach all children in Spanish, even the Germans; and by March 1866 a new nomenclature for the streets of the village was ready to get posted.<sup>48</sup>

Sometimes the colonists got visitors, as it happened on May 18, 1866, when they received the recently nominated Imperial Commissioner, Domingo Bureau.<sup>49</sup> Bureau was appointed to this position given that Salazar Ilarregui was called by Maximilian to serve as Minister of the Interior (Gobernación) in México City. Two documents exist reporting his visit to the Villa Carlota settlement: One was directed to Empress Charlotte and the other one to Francisco Somera, Minister of Fomento at that time. In his report to Charlotte,<sup>50</sup> Bureau refers specifically for the first time to the colony as "Villa Carlota"—probably named so to honor the Empress—goes over its census, and describes it as being located in a "flat terrain, probably one of the most ferocious of this department," detailing that it has "wide, perfectly traced streets, and some rustic houses of uniformed construction, which [all together] create a very pleasant sight." Bureau describes that "the settlement's prosperity is noticeable" and mentions having spoken to some of the colonists. The Germans, according to Bureau, expressed being satisfied with the benefits they had so far received, and were thankful for the support given to them by the Empire, which is expected

<sup>46</sup> [T: A colonizer, born in Germany, who lives in the "colony," and works as a *campesino*]. Colony here refers to a residential area/section in the village.

<sup>47</sup> The auto-identification of the men of Santa Elena as *labradores* o *campesinos* seems consistent through time. Until now, I have not found documents from Santa Elena where the word *mazehual*, so common in other rural areas of Yucatán, is used.

<sup>48</sup> The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Mérida, Nov. 17, 1865, AGEY M-T, vol. 20, e. 51; *idem* to *idem*, Nov. 23, 1865, *ibidem*; *idem* to *idem*, Mérida, Mar. 19, 1866, *ibidem*, c. 16, vol. 22, e. 6.

<sup>49</sup> He had previously served as Imperial Commissioner to Veracruz and, based on the documents consulted, seems to have had a good working and personal relationship with Salazar Ilarregui.

<sup>50</sup> Domingo Bureau to Charlotte, Mérida, May 23, 1866, ÖSt, KMM, K. 49. Part of this letter can also be found, unfortunately incomplete in regards to Villa Carlota, in WECKMANN 1989, pp. 360-361.

considering the addressee. It is interesting to notice Bureau's usage of the civilization vs. wilderness imagery by the description of the location where the colonists settled, a dominant theme in the immigration discourse, as heretofore shown. The report sent to the Minister of Fomento is shorter than the one dispatched to Charlotte and does not include the civilization vs. wilderness theme.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, Somera's acknowledgment of this communication, confirms that the settlement in Santa Elena was in fact the first one of several German colonies to be established in Yucatán, and that the Ministry of Fomento was fully supportive of the plan.<sup>52</sup> This corroborates that Villa Carlota was a fundamental part of the Second Empire's colonization strategy. The regime seemed indeed pleased with the results of the work put into the foundation of the colony, and recognized von Hippel's efforts by awarding him the Oficial Imperial de la Orden de Guadalupe medal.<sup>53</sup> However, the information about the program was kept quiet, perhaps waiting for a more favorable public opinion in general about foreign migration and to make sure that the results of Villa Carlota were in fact positive.

A regular visitor to Santa Elena was the already mentioned clergyman Juan Ortigón who went there almost every other week, and when he could not do so he sent his assistant, padre Miguel Garma, also a rural priest. Ortigón, a native of Santa Elena, had been ordained in 1848 and since the 1850's was in charge of the parish of Ticul, which had as auxiliaries other neighboring villages, such as Santa Elena and Pustunich. Since the arrival of the first group of colonists in 1865, he had been in close contact with them and reported in writing about the situations arising in the village to his superior in Mérida, Pedro M. Guerra Castillo, Secretary of the Yucatecan Archdioceses.<sup>54</sup> In the tone of his letters it is possible to read an interest in the success of the colony and it appears that he had much patience with the colonists themselves, sometimes being even more flexible with them than

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<sup>51</sup> Bureau to Somera, Mérida, May 2, 1866, AGEY, PE, c. 159.

<sup>52</sup> Somera to Bureau, México, June 5, 1866, *ibidem*.

<sup>53</sup> Condecoraciones, *DI*, Feb. 13, 1866. Medal awarded to officials who demonstrated special merits. A description of the awards granted by the Second Empire can be found in: Reglamento, *ibidem*, Apr. 7, 1866; For a discussion about the legitimating and social roles of court life, which includes the granting of awards and medals, see Erika PANI, 1995, El proyecto de estado de Maximiliano a través de la vida cortesana y del ceremonial público, *Historia de México*, no. 45:2, pp. 423-460.

<sup>54</sup> This line of command was probably such because of the particular situation of the Yucatecan Church. In light of the difficulties between the Vatican and the Second Empire, after the death in 1863 of Archbishop José María Guerra, no successor for that position had been named. Instead, Monsignor Leandro de la Gala was appointed as Governor of the Diocese, who delegated some responsibilities on his adjutant, Pedro Guerra. It would not be until 1868 that Rodríguez de la Gala became a Bishop. See Crescencio CARRILLO Y ANCONA, 1986 [1895], *El Obispado de Yucatán. Historia de su fundación y de sus obispos, 1677-1887*, vol. 2 (Mérida: Caballero), pp. 990 ff.

the Juez de Paz, Lizárraga. According to one of Ortégón's reports, during one his visits to Santa Elena in December of 1865, he was told by the Germans that they intended to start a beer brewery and a crackers factory.<sup>55</sup> The production of this last item may imply that they intended to become providers for the also German-speaking Enrique Stücker, a business man in Mérida, who had gotten that same year a governmental contract to provide food supplies for the military in the war against the cruzoob. This agreement comprised not only the Yucatecan and Mexican troops, but also the Austrian Free Corps sent to the peninsula.<sup>56</sup> The agreement included large amounts of crackers, which were not being produced those days in Yucatán.

It was also in December of that year, that Ortégón reported to the Archdiocese that he had started to receive requests for conversions and marriages involving members of the colony, apparently much to his pleasing.<sup>57</sup> He requested to be authorized by the Archdioceses to assist not only the immigrants who were already Catholic, but also those who might want to convert. And his request was granted.<sup>58</sup> Why would the clergy expect that so many of the immigrants would be interested in converting? The Ley Orgánica del Registro Civil issued in 1857 (Civil Registry Law) was so fiercely opposed by the Yucatecan Catholic Church, that in 1864 it was modified in that state.<sup>59</sup> This meant that in Yucatán it was mandatory to present proof of a religious marriage in order to be allowed to contract civil matrimony. Although Maximilian reconfirmed the 1857's Civil Registry Law in November 1865, the Yucatecan church kept until the 1870's opposing great resistance. This conflict could have translated into a situation where freedom of religion was restricted to private practice, therefore non-existent in reality for the colonists, who were under pressure to convert.

However, it should also be taken under consideration that during 1865 von Hippel kept a list of births and deaths among the colonists and that in 1866 the Civil Registry of Santa Elena started to function. There is evidence showing that the colonists used this institution just as the rest of the local population. In spite the fact that the colonists did not

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<sup>55</sup> Ortégón to Guerra, Ticul, Dec. 12, 1865, AHAY, vol. 40, 1866-1867.

<sup>56</sup> Oficio donde consta el compromiso contraído por Enrique Stücker con el Imperio de Maximiliano, June 3, 1865, CAIHY, XLIX, 1865, 2/4, 039; Recibo firmado por el Sr. Stücker, donde consta que le fueron entregados \$3,959.10 por cuenta del Sr. Hedermann, Comandante de la Compañía de Voluntarios Austriacos, *ibidem*, 042.

<sup>57</sup> Ortégón to Guerra, Ticul, Dec. 23 and 29, 1865, AHAY, vol. 40, 1866-1867.

<sup>58</sup> Guerra to Ortégón, Mérida, Dec. 29, 186, *ibidem*, vol. 18, 1865-1867.

<sup>59</sup> María Teresa López Cárdenas, 2004, Secularización institucional y de la vida privada en Yucatán 1859-1876 (Thesis: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán), cited in CANTO MAYÉN 2006, pp. 192-193.

have a Protestant pastor, and that the dispute around the civil registry legislation could have caused uncertainty about the formalization of civil matters, until now no written complains from the colonists have been located referring to possible coercion to convert, neither has anything be found in Juan Ortigón and Pedro Guerra's correspondence that could be interpreted in that direction. Furthermore, the Church appears to have actively supported the Empire in this project and not to have ostracized those colonists who were Protestant from community life. To understand why the Church played such an important role in these events it is important to realize that, contrary to the general situation in the country,<sup>60</sup> the Yucatecan Catholic Church supported the French Intervention and the Second Empire.<sup>61</sup> There were *Te deums* to every official occasion;<sup>62</sup> clergymen informed the regime about the activities of the pacified Maya;<sup>63</sup> "Die Geistlichkeit ist hier enthusiastisch," wrote Charlotte to Maximilian on November 1865, relating also several events and occasions in which the Church representatives showed their sympathy for the Empress and the Monarchy.<sup>64</sup> The main objective of the church was to regain control of its properties, income and educational institutions. But especially in rural areas the friars were in need of parishioners who would be willing and able to pay church contributions. This all could have contributed to the clergymen not being opposed to the immigration of some Protestants among the colonists in 1864-1865.

The documents show that by the first semester of 1866 the beginning of an organization started to show up in Villa Carlota: The colono Wilhelm Biedermann had already taking over the function of an *abastecedor* (supplier), meaning that he picked up the weekly supplies for the colony from Ticul and distribute them in Santa Elena, while Hermann Beiswenger was functioning as a medical doctor, and, for example, worked together with Lizárraga by certifying the death of a colonist.<sup>65</sup> It appears that rather rapidly the Villa Carlotans were swayed to begin to learn the Maya language and to interact with the locals, as well as to define themselves in relationship to the receiving group.

<sup>60</sup> For a detail analysis see GALEANA DE VALADÉS 1991; RATZ 1998, pp. 310-334.

<sup>61</sup> CANTO MAYÉN 2006, pp. 54-55, 190-193; MENÉNDEZ RODRÍGUEZ 1995, pp. 27-64.

<sup>62</sup> See SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, *passim*; *PoDY* for the years 1864 to 1866; AHAY, vol. 18, 1865-1867.

<sup>63</sup> Inés de CASTRO, 2002, *Die Geschichte der sogenannten Pacíficos del Sur während des Kastenkrieges von Yucatán 1851-1895. Eine ethnohistorische Untersuchung* (Dissertation: Universität Bonn), pp. 135-146; RUGELEY 2001, pp. 123-127.

<sup>64</sup> Cited in RATZ 1998, p. 342. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that one of Charlotte's advisors in Yucatán was the priest and historian Crescencio Ancona Carrillo. See, for example, part of his series of reports to Charlotte, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989.

<sup>65</sup> Enrique Augusto [Heinrich August] Reichert, Registro Civil de Santa Elena (hereafter cited as RCSE), Defunciones, 1866, July 25, 1866.

But even if the colony continued "running very well,"<sup>66</sup> which apparently it did based on the reports of Bureau, there were already concerns in terms of how long the Second Empire was going to be able to finance it in light of the political and economic situation. Since his arrival in Yucatán, Bureau had found the finances in a very serious condition.<sup>67</sup> He conveyed in his regular communication to Charlotte that there was a deficit of 150,000 pesos; military expenses were rapidly rising because of the war against the cruzob and the uprisings in Tabasco; regional tax collection had decreased, given that Yucatecan cotton was no longer in as much demand as it had been before the end of American Civil War. Bureau implemented budget cuts and asked the central regime for additional sources. But not only Yucatán's finances were low. The whole budget of the Empire was going into red. The possibility of France retiring its support to Maximilian had been threatening the Second Empire since January<sup>68</sup> and became official at the end of May, 1866 when Napoleon III announced the start of his army's withdrawal.

#### **4. How was Villa Carlota Financed?**

In the 1840's an attempt to estimate how much it would cost the government to support a military colony with 2,000 families had been made: Around \$200,000 in direct expenses to subsidize the colonists during the first year, plus \$300,000 to establish the settlement and its corresponding infrastructure.<sup>69</sup> Besides not having the funds for such an enterprise, the Conservatives argued that it was ridiculous to finance foreigners in need, instead of the local underprivileged population. This argumentation would continue during the Second Empire, with critics such as Francisco de Paula de Arrangoiz. But, on the other hand, the Mexican government heard a different line of argumentation, such as the one exposed by the German citizen Gustav Schadtler to the then Mexican President Ignacio Comonfort. Schadtler stated that unless México made "the necessary sacrifices" to invest in subsidizing poor colonists, no other economic groups would migrate.<sup>70</sup>

The Second Empire took the risk and committed to the financing of Villa Carlota. Had it been known publicly at national level, it would have for sure caused great criticism, given that there was opposition to it, as it can be deduced from the fact that in 1865 an

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<sup>66</sup> Bureau to Charlotte, Mérida, June 8, 1866, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989, p. 362.

<sup>67</sup> *Idem to idem*, Mérida, May 9, 1866, *ibidem*, p. 360.

<sup>68</sup> RATZ 1998, pp. 382-385.

<sup>69</sup> BERNINGER 1974, p. 143. The author does not specify if the amount was in dollars or pesos.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem* p. 172-173. Schadtler became in 1858 representative of the *Zollverein* in México.

authorized subsidy of 10,000 pesos for immigrants' aid was in México's capital strongly disapproved and denounced as favoritism.<sup>71</sup> Also to consider is that in 1864 Salazar Ilarregui was probably counting on winning the hacendados as partners in this program. But until now, no evidence has been found that will suggest cooperation from the Yucatecan elite with the project, neither does it seem that the colonists brought with themselves a start-up capital at all. Documental evidence points to the Empire as being the only sponsor of the colonists. To the present, paid invoices for direct expenses of the German colonization projects in Yucatán adding up to 78,702.00 pesos have been located, plus information of two unpaid promissory notes.<sup>72</sup> That amount by itself was already a considerable part of the state's budget,<sup>73</sup> and considering the opposition to subsidized migration it could have created great indignation if that data was to transcend governmental circles.

That would partially explain why already in 1865 no more information about the German colonies in Yucatán was given to the newspapers. Yucatán's own financial resources, coming from the customs office in Sisal, plus income and business taxes, did not amount to much and were irregular, according to several letters from the Imperial Commissioner.<sup>74</sup> Occasionally and with previous approval, the state could keep additional money, such as that coming from the sale of vacant lands.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, Yucatán depended largely on the 60,000 pesos monthly remittances from Veracruz's customs office,<sup>76</sup> which were neither sent punctually nor in full. The documents show a constant struggle to balance the budget, especially when the military expenses increased because of the different Liberal and cruzob uprisings in the peninsula. But the first group of colonists was by 1865 in Yucatán already, and a second one was on the way. In spite of all odds, the regime continued to make expenditures on behalf of the settlers. The Empire probably hoped that after the first harvest the colonists would be self-sufficient and in a position to honor their part of the contract, repaying the disbursements the Empire had made for them in advance.

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<sup>71</sup> HANNA and HANNA 1971, p. 206.

<sup>72</sup> Several documents are to be found among others in the following folders: CAIHY, XLVIII, 1865, 1/2, 023; *ibidem*, 024, and LV-1866, 4/4, 023; R. Cantón (?) to Pablo Tommasek, Mérida, July 1, 1867, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, Special Collection Division, José Salazar Ilarregui Papers (hereafter cited as UTAL, SIP), GA 210, folder 23, fol. 12.

<sup>73</sup> As comparison: Yucatán received an initial military budget of 60,000 pesos in 1864-1865, while the whole budget for the Banco de Avío de Yucatán amounted to 15,000 pesos.

<sup>74</sup> For example those written in Jan. 8 and Feb. 14, 1865, deposited in ÖSt, KMM, K. 18.

<sup>75</sup> Domingo Bureau to Charlotte, Mérida, May 9, 1866, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989, p. 360.

<sup>76</sup> O.F. no. 217, Veracruz, Dec. 21, 1865, *ibidem*, p. 362.

## B. The Second Group of Settlers

The second group of colonists left Hamburg on board the "San Luis" on May 15, 1866. The 215 settlers arrived in Sisal almost two months later. Their reception although apparently friendly seems not to have been as euphoric as that given to the 1865 group.<sup>77</sup> That could have been partly caused by the fear arising from a cholera epidemic that those days was affecting the seaport.<sup>78</sup> The Yucatecan official newspaper barely mentioned the arrival of the second group of settlers on one occasion, being careful not to present a breakdown of families vs. singles—which probably reflects concerns against non-married people as immigrants—avoiding specifics about where these colonists were to be settled, and not mentioning whether the regime had given them economic support or not.<sup>79</sup> Besides the financial aspects presented above, there were other situations which have to be considered in order to try to understand what could have led to this downplaying of the information.

Contributing to this scant enthusiasm was without a doubt the fact that the Mexican Empire was already swaying. The Unionist had won the American Civil War and refused to recognize Maximilian's Empire calling up on the Monroe Doctrine. Responding both to internal pressure in France to stop the Mexican expedition as well as to complaints from the United States, Napoleon III began to evacuate his troops in July 1866. This opened the door for the Republicans—aided by the United States—to regain the national territory starting at some of the northern border cities and the Mexican seaports, which provided them with funds from taxes and customs fees. The Empire went into what Lubienski has called its conservative phase in which most of the Liberal cabinet members were replaced by Conservatives.<sup>80</sup> The colonization with Confederate refugees had been highly criticized, seemed unsuccessful and caused diplomatic conflicts, to the point that in May 1866 the Imperial Ministry of Colonization was canceled and Maximilian declared having no more need of Commodore Maury's services.<sup>81</sup> Just a couple of months later, colonization was taken out of the national media's agenda, and even those who until then had supported it

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<sup>77</sup> The Prefecto to the Imperial Commissioner, Mérida, July 16, 1866, Parte de novedades de la quincena de Julio del corriente, AGEY, PE, c. 162.

<sup>78</sup> *Idem to idem*, May 16, 1866, Partes dados sobre las novedades ocurridas en el Departamento de Yucatán la quincena anterior, AGEY, PE, c. 162; *idem to idem*, May 20, 1866, *ibidem*; *idem to idem*, June 1, 1866, *ibidem*.

<sup>79</sup> The only recollection of this note has been found in MENÉNDEZ GONZÁLEZ 1937, p. 221.

<sup>80</sup> LUBIENSKI 1988, pp. 45, 61-64.

<sup>81</sup> HANNA and HANNA 1971, pp. 204, 207-208, 234.

closed the case by stating that "the boldest are retreating and those who have speculated are sorry."<sup>82</sup>

At regional level, the initial conciliatory political strategy taken by the Second Empire in the peninsula turned into what the yucatecos considered as a more dominant and repressive tone.<sup>83</sup> Even though the oligarchy was pleased by the participation of locals in the administration and by the public works initiated by the Empire, it was also disenchanted by its political and social programs, and by 1866 had already withdrawn its support to the Monarchy.<sup>84</sup> On the first aspect, they resented having non-Yucatecan as heads of the political and military matters in the peninsula, opposed the centralization of power and economical resources in México City, and proceeded to boycott the Empire's policies and projects.<sup>85</sup> The elite actively rejected the laws issued by Maximilian to regulate the working conditions of the laborers and the property rights of the underprivileged, who in Yucatán were mostly the Maya. The oligarchy also disregarded and criticized the institutions founded by the Empire to represent the needs of the indígenas, such as the Junta Protectora de las Clases Menesterosas.<sup>86</sup> They blamed the Empire for the ongoing Caste War. Public animosity against the French ended up in violence, about which the official newspaper did not report at all.<sup>87</sup> So that by the time the second group of Germans arrived, the Empire was already trying to put out several fires at the same time, and was no longer in a position to do much for the colonists.

Despite not having as many resources and supporters as in 1865, the Empire attempted to honor its commitments. According to a report from Bureau in June 1866, Pustunich, a small Maya village with only 250 inhabitants located 16 Km roughly east of Santa Elena, had been selected for the second settlement.<sup>88</sup> But it appears that the Imperial Commissioner was improperly informed. In his communication to the Empress he states that 500 Germans were on their way to Yucatán and that the house construction in Pustunich was already being done. However, based on documental evidence, there were

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<sup>82</sup> *L'Estafette*, quoted by HANNA and HANNA 1947, p. 246.

<sup>83</sup> CANTO MAYÉN 2006, pp. 97-98.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 84-85; SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, esp. pp. 127-143.

<sup>85</sup> An analysis of the Central versus the Yucatecan Monarchists' agendas can be found in CANTO MAYÉN 2006, esp. pp. 77-110.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 85; SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, pp. 129-131. For an analysis of the activities of this Junta, refer to: Marie LAPOINTE, 1997, The Indigenous Policy of Maximilian in Yucatán, *Saastun. Maya Culture Review*. no. 3, pp. 47-66; RUGELEY 1995.

<sup>87</sup> Linchamiento en Dzilam de dos franceses por la muchedumbre, June-Aug. 1866, AGEY, Justicia Penal (hereafter cited as JP), v. 112, e. 96.

<sup>88</sup> Bureau to Charlotte, Mérida, June 8, 1866, printed in full by WECKMANN 1989, p. 362.



only 215 settlers and by the beginning of July not a single house was built in Pustunich.<sup>89</sup> As the colonists actually arrived to Mérida a new plan had been formulated by the regime. The newcomers were to be directed to Santa Elena, where there were vacant houses, allegedly left by colonists from the 1865 group who had relocated.<sup>90</sup> But something went wrong. Just a few days after that, the Prefecto Político requested from the Yucatecan Archdioceses to please allow, just for a few days, for the Germans to stay in the Catholic church's building in Pustunich.<sup>91</sup> But the days turned into months, and not only the villagers grew uneasy about having Protestant foreigners living in a Catholic church,<sup>92</sup> but also padre Ortegón. He complained in writing to the Prefecto that the church was filthy and full with smoke, asking that the foreigners be immediately evacuated and that the building be cleaned and repaired.<sup>93</sup>



Figure 5. The Church of Pustunich, 2004. Photograph by Stephan Merk.

<sup>89</sup> The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Mérida, July 3, 1866, AGEY, M-T, c. 8, vol. 10, e. 2. Pustunich, being a small village, only had a *Comisario* (Commissary) and his substitute as governmental administrators. See Appendix B.

<sup>90</sup> *Idem* to the Imperial Commissioner, Mérida, July 16, 1866, Parte de novedades de la quincena de Julio del corriente, AGEY, PE, c. 162.

<sup>91</sup> Ortégón to the Prefecto, Ticul, Nov., 1866, *ibidem*, Iglesia, c. 164.

<sup>92</sup> *Idem* to Guerra, Ticul, Oct. 12, 1866, AHAY, vol. 40, 1866-1867.

<sup>93</sup> *Idem* to the Prefecto, Ticul, Nov., 1866, AGEY, Iglesia, c. 164.

Although it appears that some members of the 1866 group remained in Pustunich even after the fall of the Empire, it is until now unclear how their living conditions there were. Archival evidence backs up that three singles and two families, totaling 12 people, were in fact relocated into Mérida and the Laguna de Términos area, that at least one family was sent to work for a hacendado in the north of the peninsula, and that others went to Santa Elena. This second site in Pustunich does not seem to have actually been properly settled, neither given a separate name. The official correspondence bundles up both settlements under "Villa Carlota." Therefore, even though only one name appears, actually two settlements were planned, and more or less carried out. It is possible, thus, to state that there were two German colonies in Yucatán: one in Santa Elena and one in Pustunich, and that the name of the whole project was Villa Carlota.

### C. Accommodation and Conflict

Those colonists assigned to Santa Elena continued to accommodate themselves to their new society. What appears to be the first election in Villa Carlota took place on August 21, 1866, when the colonist Friedrich Reiche was elected *Alcalde* (Mayor) of the settlement.<sup>94</sup> However, that did not work out so well. By the end of the month, he requested in writing to the Imperial Commissioner to be removed from his position and relocated into Mérida, arguing animosity and even death threats from some fellow colonists, and that too high demands were set upon him.<sup>95</sup> The letter was written in German and later translated into Spanish in Mérida by someone whose first language was Spanish, but whose signature I can not yet identify. Comparing the original and the translation, some differences can be found. The original reports a lack of support on part of the local Hispanic authorities of Santa Elena and expresses mistrust against some indígenas. These two aspects were omitted or downplayed in the Spanish translation, making the colonist's claim sound more as a personal problem by suppressing the social and cultural components. Reiche's request, by the way, was denied.

Despite these drawbacks, some relationships went well. Especially the contact between Germans and the locals seems to have developed rather quickly in what in

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<sup>94</sup> The reasons for the selection of Reiche are unclear. Once in Yucatán, he had an accident in which he lost one hand. It is possible that he was only elected as Mayor because he could not fulfill anymore his job as a farmer and butcher. If that was the case, it would speak poorly about the ability of the colonists to understand the importance of the role of an *Alcalde* and about their capacity to take sound decisions as a group.

<sup>95</sup> Friedrich Reiche to the Imperial Commissioner, Villa Carlota, Sept. 1, 1866, AGEY, PE, c. 156.

acculturation studies is called the development of significant associations. The 1866's books of baptism show that in the second semester of that year a total of 32 Germans were baptized or converted to the Catholic religion.<sup>96</sup> In 30 of those cases, the *compadres*,<sup>97</sup> that is the godfather or godmother as given the case, were Hispanics from Santa Elena, while only in two occasions the sponsor was a person of a Maya patronymic. In rural Yucatán during that time, the commitment created by the *compadrazgo* (co-parenthood) ritual went beyond that to the well being of the child, extending to the *compadres* themselves, that is, to the parents of the baptized and the sponsors of this latter one. This ritual extension and sometimes reorganization of the kinship structure usually served to insure strategic positions in the village, a long-enduring but not necessary symmetrical relationship, mutual social and economical support, as well as cultural and individual mobility.<sup>98</sup> The fact that Germans solicited, and gained, Hispanics to be their *compadres*, and that the selected godfathers were members of Santa Elena's elite may be interpreted as a group response to a phase of rapid social change, and as a sign of acceptance of the colonists as members of the community.<sup>99</sup> Also as entrance into Santa Elena's elite can the first marriage between a German woman and a local Hispanic in 1866 be seen.<sup>100</sup> But how to explain that the colonists, being poor, were accepted by the upper class as partners for such affiliations? First, because of the rural setting, and as a result of the war devastation, the local elite had become impoverished, thus, the social distance between them and the colonists was not

<sup>96</sup> Libro de bautizos de Ticul y Santa Elena II, c6, # 3 bis, 1866 a 1867, Archivo General de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán, several dates and entries; Libro de bautizos de Ticul y Santa Elena, I.3, 1866-1869, *ibidem*, various dates and entries.

<sup>97</sup> Co-parenthood, an institution brought by the Spanish conquerors to the America, is until our days an important ritual mechanism to create cultural value and extend a social network. In the case of the Villa Carlota, *compadrazgo* was concentrated around the participation in the ritual of Catholic baptism and conversion to Catholicism.

<sup>98</sup> Robert REDFIELD, 1950 [1941], *The Folk Culture of Yucatan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 123-125. See also Richard A. THOMPSON, 1974, *The Winds of Tomorrow. Social Change in a Maya Town* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), esp. pp. 35-45.

<sup>99</sup> According to Mintz and Wolf, homogeneous, self-contained communities tend to horizontal patterns of *compadrazgo*, while those containing several interacting classes and undergoing rapid social change shift to a vertical, diversified, inter-class *compadrazgo* mechanism in an attempt to restructure the relationships in the village. See Sidney W. MINTZ and Eric R. WOLF, 1950, An Analysis of Ritual Co-parenthood (*Compadrazgo*), *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, no. 6:4, pp. 341-368, und *passim*.

<sup>100</sup> Mauro Antonio Machado and Federica [Friederike] Dietrich, August 19, 1866, RCSE, Matrimonios y presentaciones, 1866-1868. Additionally, there were another two marriages between German women and local men in Santa Elena a few years after the collapse of Villa Carlota (one of them is mentioned here in p. 64, 72n). It is in regards to these rituals, meaning marriages and births, where major discrepancies are found between what has been published from data obtained from oral recollections (MEDINA UN 2001) and documental evidence consulted for this thesis. Although revealing, this aspect falls outside the providence of the present thesis, but can be dealt with in another paper in the future.

perceived as being so large; second, probably a potential mobility was imagined by the locals from the Germans as skilled laborers along with the support of the Second Empire to develop their colony; third, the settlers were most probably not perceived as threatening, given that they were not businessmen or hacendados, but identified as campesinos, laboring on lands nobody wanted for being so close to the *cruzoob*; and fourth, because they were not *indígenas* and probably most of them had a light skin color, which, even until our days, is to some extent preferred in México. But besides co-parenting and marriages, there might be other relationships to consider, namely those resulting in out-of-wedlock children from German men and Maya women, whom the locals maintain were several.<sup>101</sup>

How did this closeness develop so rapidly? As mentioned before, Germans and locals had to cooperate. But perhaps the interactions were promoted not only because of the organizational structure of the colony, but also because of two other factors: The pattern of the settlement and the economic need of the colonists.

While speaking about the pattern of the settlement it is meant that the colonists were not living as one isolated group. In her ethnographical essay Martha Medina Un reports that people in Santa Elena sustain that some German families lived to the south of town, in the San Marcos area.<sup>102</sup> This information has been hereby confirmed by documental evidence. The "colonia," as the living quarters of the settlers were referred to in official correspondence, was located only six blocks south to the main square, that is around a half kilometer away.<sup>103</sup> That means that, for example, the Germans had to obtain water from the same wells as the locals did,<sup>104</sup> an activity in Yucatán traditionally carried out by women, which besides the utilitarian aspect also has a social dimension. Likewise were the collection of firewood and the hunting of game done in a shared area. And all people went downtown, which was the center of the village's life. There are also indications that probably other places a few kilometers outside of Santa Elena, such as the

<sup>101</sup> Similar miscegenation cases have been reported between the German coffee-barons and the Q'echi' women in Guatemala. See Jon SCHACKT, 2006, Q'eqchi' Ladinos and „White Indians”: Cultural Identities in Northern Guatemala, in: *Acta Mesoamericana, Maya Ethnicity: The Construction of Ethnic Identity [...]*, (ed.) Frauke Sachse (Markt Schwaben: Saurwein), pp. 233-244.

<sup>102</sup> MEDINA UN 2001, p. 30.

<sup>103</sup> Memoria comparativa y estadística del pueblo de Santa Elena, partido de Ticul, antes y después de la sublevación de los indios, Santa Elena, May 12, 1864, AGEY, M-T, c. 11, vol. 15, e. 4; The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Mérida, Jan. 2, 1865, *ibidem*. See also *ibidem*, c. 14, v. 19, e. 1 and 2; Testamentaria del Lic. Desiderio Lizárraga, 1882-1887, AGEY, Justicia Civil (hereafter cited as JC), v. 74, e. 74.

<sup>104</sup> For example, from the San Marcos well, as reported by MEDINA UN 2001, p. 30.

San Andrés and Xpilicab areas, were too occupied or cultivated by some of the German families.<sup>105</sup> However, other sources need to be consulted for corroboration.

The second factor mentioned, the poverty of the colonists, refers to the fact that besides requiring support since their arrival, the Germans saw already by 1866 their possibilities to make a living rapidly diminishing, because of the impossibility to cultivate the land and the diminishing funds of the Empire. According to Medina Un's report, the Germans required and got help from the locals in practical and health related matters, as well as donations of food and kitchen utensils.<sup>106</sup> Documents seem to confirm this information. As an example, the colono Maximilian Biedermann wrote in a letter that a person in Santa Elena was allowing him to sleep in his house and providing him with meals.<sup>107</sup>

Nonetheless, the interactions were not always friendly. Actually, since the beginning of 1866 there were disciplinary, organizational and legal problems. Some colonists caused disturbances and became violent, being turned over by the Juez de Paz de Santa Elena to the police authorities of the district. At least one colonist, August Dietrich, stood trial and served time in Mérida's prison, according to judicial files. On another criminal investigation, the colonist Heinrich August Reichert was murdered in 1866, just a few days after he had arrived to Santa Elena and another colonist was found guilty, being freed only after a revision of the case was promoted by the Imperial Commissioner.<sup>108</sup> There is documental evidence of a total of 12 people who ran away from the colony. According to the contract they had signed, the Empire had the right to be reimbursed for the expenses the colonists had incurred. Therefore, there were cases when orders of apprehension were issued.<sup>109</sup> Some colonists escaped the authorities, others died in prison while under arrest, and a few were returned to Villa Carlota.

But actually, the peak of the crisis was reached in the second half of 1866, when it became clear that the so long awaited first harvest was not going to be successful. Based on

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<sup>105</sup> Both places have a cave in which rainwater collects. By inspecting the Xpilicab location in 2005, I observed what appears to indicate that the colonos had already began to dig a well, which did not reach water level.

<sup>106</sup> MEDINA UN 2001, p. 30.

<sup>107</sup> Maximilian Biedermann to the Imperial Commissioner, s.l., Aug. 31, 1866, AGEY, PE, c. 160.

<sup>108</sup> Causa seguida a Federico Griesse, colono alemán, por presunto homicidio, *ibidem*, JP, 1866, Homicidio, v. 113, e. 61. In Mérida, and not only by court cases, several people served as translators for the Germans, for example von Hippel and the already mentioned Eduardo Pinkus.

<sup>109</sup> See for example AGEY, PE, c. 159. Legal records deposited in several archives contain enough information for a future analysis.

the climatic conditions of the peninsula, the farmers probably planted their seeds before May, expecting to reap in September. But even before it was time to harvest, about 1/3 of the heads of family had given up on the location. On August 12, 1866, some of the Villa Carlottans directed a letter to the Imperial Commissioner.<sup>110</sup> Signed by 36 people, of which 28 had arrived in 1865, the settlers intend to convince the Commissioner to please "uns entweder in den mexikanischen Staaten anders und besser unter zu bringen, oder zurück in unsere Heimath zu schaffen."<sup>111</sup> As in the previously presented case of Friedrich Reiche's letter, the Spanish translation deviates from the original, differences which are relevant for understanding the consequences of these documents. Thus, the content of the original letter will be analyzed, to afterwards highlight the discrepancies of the translation and the results brought about.

On the one hand, the settlers recognized that the regime had kept part of its promises in such matters as the distribution of land and the supplying of staple food provisions.<sup>112</sup> On the other, they stated that based on their experience, it was unfeasible for a German colony to subsist, nevertheless to succeed in Yucatán. At practical level, they claimed to have been misled by the description of Yucatán as an extreme fertile land. In reality, they said to have found it to be of poor quality, with adverse weather, and conditions which made it impossible to use the plow, given the large amount of limestone in the area, thus "jeden Versuch hier deutsche Früchte oder Küchengewächse anzubauen ist fehlgeschlagen."<sup>113</sup> The colonists labeled as unrealistic the expectations that they produce cotton, henequen and tobacco without having a capital, as was their case, and stated that they were living in extreme poverty, without any chance for improvement.<sup>114</sup> They accused von Hippel of being unsympathetic, even offensive, to them and of doing a poor job by the selection of the location.<sup>115</sup> The Villa Carlottans described their poor physical condition and the emotional despair under which the families suffer, concluding that "hier können wier durch den größten Fleiß die größte Anstrengung nicht vorwärts kommen. Und das viele Geld was die Regierung für uns ausgegeben hat ist verloren, hier können wier es nie

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<sup>110</sup> This document and its Spanish translation have already been introduced in p. 55, 45n. A copy of it is attached and referred to as Appendix B. All the footnotes in this segment relate to the already mentioned appendix.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*, par. 14.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*, par. 2.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibidem*, par. 1, 5, 11-12.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibidem*, par. 3-4.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibidem*, par. 6-8, 13.

bezahlen."<sup>116</sup> The letter, therefore, questions the whole colonization project itself, stressing the adverse conditions of the site. But it also shows that the colonists did not perceive von Hippel as an employee of the regime, nor understood that other people were involved in the decisions of where and how the colony was to function.

The Spanish translation shows four major differences. First, it adds some information, as for example, when the colonists mention that they have to hire themselves out as daily laborers, it is clarified that it refers to construction work in the new settlement of Pustunich. Second, the treatment of the failed harvest is attributed to a plague of ants, which is a temporary factor, instead of remaining faithful to the original which referred to permanent conditions, such as the inappropriateness of the soil and the geological and climatologic settings. Third, it downplays the complaints of the colonists about the little results of their work, the need for capital and the fact that they could not repay the government the expenses it had made for them. And fourth, it shifts the attention from the principal objective of the letter: The settlers wanted to bring to the foreground that a farming colony could not succeed in Yucatán and wanted to be relocated. Instead, the translation and the cover letter added to it, which reads "Solicitud de los Colonos de Sta Elena, acusando á Mr. von Hippel de falsedad y no cumplimiento á las promesas que les hizo al traerlos," (Request in which the colonists of Santa Elena accuse Mr. von Hippel of having misled them and not honoring the promises he made at the time of recruiting) reframe the conflict by directing it to the person of von Hippel.<sup>117</sup>

What was the intention behind those diversions? One could think that it was just an inaccurate translation, which is unlikely. Or that it was an attempt to "soften" the claim, so that the regime would not consider itself criticized for its decisions and performance, or would get the impression that the colonists were too demanding. Perhaps too, that it had as objective to discredit von Hippel, or to take the attention away from the possibility that by the selection of the location—for which von Hippel was not responsible—an irreparable mistake could have been made.

Besides what is said in the letter, it is also important to notice what is not included. First, the settlers did not mention anything about a different location instead of Santa Elena being promised. From that, it could be confirmed that on the brochure and the plan

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibidem*, par. 8-9, 12.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibidem*, cover, p 119.

presented in Germany it was only stated that the colony would be settled in Yucatán, without further specifications. Second, no concerns about a possible threat by the *cruzoob* are mentioned, which means that the area at that moment was experienced by the Germans as relatively safe. Third, neither discrimination nor coercion in religious matters was expressed. And fourth, they do not mention having problems with the villagers, neither animosity nor hostility on part of the locals, which reinforces the hypothesis that even though things were not perfect, there was a certain degree of acceptance or tolerance among the different communities. This doesn't mean that there were no frictions and disagreements: As it has been here presented, other documents show that they were indeed some. The fact that they were absent from the letter to the Imperial Commissioner seems to express that they were not considered of capital importance.

One more question comes up: Why did only 36 heads of family signed the complaint, out of circa 119 who started with the project? Unfortunately it is not possible to offer an answer at this point based on the surviving documents. Actually, it is not even feasible to determine if that number represented the majority or not of the heads of family, given that some died, several ran away, others relocated and a few more were assigned to work in haciendas. It is, however, clear that not all the heads of family who were still living in both locations—meaning Santa Elena and Pustunich—signed. The reasons as to why could vary: Some of those arriving with the second group perhaps wanted to allow themselves some time before such proceeding, others perhaps feared or doubted the results of such an action and perhaps a few did not care to do so, such as the troublemakers who were, so the accounts of other colonists, just happy getting some benefits.

Bureau turned the case of the Villa Carlotans to his advisors. A recommendation was issued on October 13, 1866, of which unfortunately only the cover letter has been located. But even before the advisory board made its suggestions, some changes started to be implemented. Therefore, the request presented to the Imperial Commissioner should be seen as an example of the strategies the colonists developed in an attempt to influence the system. These were definitive not passive, submissive people. The letter shows the settlers' ability to demand what they understood was promised to them by legal means, and to do so within the institutional system; it also demonstrates their skills to appeal to emotions and their having mastered the art of petitioning to a higher authority. It comes across that the colonists had their own ideas about their objectives and how to accomplish them, as well as



aspirations to certain standards of living and to the right of self-determination. These characteristics may have been regarded as undesirable by members of the local oligarchy, several of whom, one should remember, were also part of the Imperial Commissioner's staff and advisory boards.

#### **D. Change of Command**

Almost around the same time as the Commissioner's advisors were thinking about what to do, a document written by von Hippel confirms that he had put in black and white what perhaps no one wanted to face: That given Yucatán's poor soil it was impossible for Europeans to make a living as farmers, as "the experience in the past 10 months has proved," he wrote, referring to Villa Carlota.<sup>118</sup> By September 8, von Hippel had already quit his position and Bureau had designated the military engineer Pablo Tommasek to replace him.<sup>119</sup> Another officer was appointed to ensure the appropriate handing over of the colonies to Tommasek.<sup>120</sup>

Other changes took place as per order of the Imperial Commissioner: The colono Christoph Heinze was named Police Commissioner of Villa Carlota, the position of School Teacher was given to the settler August Franke, and arrangements were made for a regular cart service connecting Santa Elena and Pustunich.<sup>121</sup>

During this time in which the regime was attempting to save Villa Carlota, the situation of the Second Empire itself was deteriorating. Bureau was called back to Veracruz and Salazar Ilarregui returned to Yucatán as Imperial Commissioner in November. Republican uprisings broke out in different parts of the peninsula<sup>122</sup> while the cruzob intensified their guerrilla style raids.<sup>123</sup> Others, taking advantage of the anarchy, formed in rapacious groups to steal and destroy whatever they could. Desertions from the army increased and the draft was extended even to the indígenas, who were supposed to be

<sup>118</sup> Von Hippel to the Imperial Commissioner, Mérida, Sept. 2, 1866, AGEY, PE, c. 160.

<sup>119</sup> Bureau to the General Commander, Mérida, Sept. 8, 1866, *ibidem*. Probably a member of the Donau-Monarchy, Pablo Tommasek (who had already Hispanicized his name) was a foreign officer serving in the Mexican military.

<sup>120</sup> The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Mérida, Sept. 9, 1866, *ibidem*, M-T, c. 16, vol. 22.

<sup>121</sup> *Idem* to *idem*, Mérida, Oct. 13, 1866, *ibidem*, c. 16, vol. 23.

<sup>122</sup> For example, Buenaventura Martínez, in Mocochá, see: Terry RUGELEY, 2003, *The Forgotten Liberator: Buenaventura Martínez and Yucatán's Republican Restoration*, *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, no. 19:2, pp. 331-366. Another uprising was headed by Chelo Muñoz, in Campeche y Pablo García Montilla, in Tabasco. In Yucatán, a group of influent meridianos, headed by Eligio Ancona Castillo, was also active. See CANTO MAYÉN 2006, p. 113.

<sup>123</sup> REED 1964, pp. 194 -196; de CASTRO 2001, pp. 134-135.

exempt from the military.<sup>124</sup> Several documents show that Salazar Ilarregui attempted unsuccessfully to get additional money and military forces from the central government.<sup>125</sup> Insecurity also got to the area where the German settlements were located. By December 1866, it was no longer possible to travel between Santa Elena and Pustunich without a military escort for fear of an attack.<sup>126</sup> At that point, the government made an attempt to offer the labor of the Germans in Mérida to anyone interested in hiring them. Advertisements in the official Yucatecan newspaper were ordered, listing Tommasek as a contact person, and giving an address in Mérida.<sup>127</sup> But by the time the ads came out, in January 1867, it was already too late. The Republican forces were threatening Mérida, which was declared under siege that same month.<sup>128</sup>

A few days before, some Germans had been already drafted into the Imperialist military corps.

### **E. The Collapse of Villa Carlota**

Article 14 of the colonizers' contract stipulated that "Die Einwanderer sind militärfrei, doch sind dieselben im Nothfall zur Vertheidigung ihrer Colonie verpflichtet."<sup>129</sup> Being short of soldiers, Salazar Ilarregui authorized the recruitment of 30 German colonists to reinforce Colonel Daniel Traconis' section.<sup>130</sup> By then the situation in the peninsula had deteriorated. During the third week of January the cruzoob bypassed the garrisons in the northeast frontline and moved in direction to the Puuc region, where Ticul, Santa Elena and Pustunich are located, causing great devastation and taking people as prisoners.<sup>131</sup> The area was unsafe. On the 29 of that month 40 armed colonists, and not 30, were sent from Ticul to Mérida under the command of Carlos Young,<sup>132</sup> who probably met with Pablo Tommasek in Mérida, given that after that date they would conform in a military group headed by Tommasek. As of yet it is unclear if additional colonists were requested by the regime, or if more of them enlisted themselves voluntarily.

<sup>124</sup> The Prefecto to the Subprefecto, Mérida, Oct. 26, 1866, AGEY, M-T, c. 16, v. 22, e. 2.

<sup>125</sup> Sesiones del Consejo de Ministros, Alcázar de Chapultepec, México, Aug. 27 and Dec. 23, 1866, ÖSt, KMM, K. 27.

<sup>126</sup> Commander Rosado to the Imperial Commissioner, Dec. 7, 1866; AGEY, PE, v. 152.

<sup>127</sup> Anuncios, *PoDY*, Jan. 17, 21 and 24, 1867.

<sup>128</sup> SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, p. 148.

<sup>129</sup> SCHOTT 1866, p. 471.

<sup>130</sup> Salazar Ilarregui to the Chief General of the east and south defense lines, Mérida, Sept. 11, 1867, CAIHY, LVI, 1867, 011; Salazar Ilarregui to the Colonel Silvano Hernández, Jan. 1867, *ibidem*, XLVIII, 1865, 1-4.

<sup>131</sup> General Navarrete to the Imperial Commissioner, Ticul, Jan. 21, 1867, AGEY, PE, c. 162.

<sup>132</sup> Sebastián Heredia to Salazar Ilarregui, Ticul, Jan. 29, 1867, UTAL, SIP, GA 211, folder 18.

In all these, what was the position of the colonists, from a diplomatic point of view? There are several aspects to consider. The statistics of Germans living in México during the Second Empire do not include them and even though, as presented before, Bismarck and the Ministerium des Inneren were aware that there were hundreds of German farmers in Yucatán, the diplomatic correspondence until now consulted between the Baron Anton von Magnus and Bismarck does not mention them specifically at all.<sup>133</sup> Seeing the Empire tottering, Bismarck had already announced to Magnus in September 1866 that in case of a necessary evacuation of Prussian civil population:

so darf man wohl annehmen, daß in den Küstenplätzen auch ihnen die Anwesenheit der Kriegsschiffe zugute kommen würde, welche befreundete Seemächte ohne Zweifel zum Schutze ihrer Angehörigen an Ort und Stelle schicken werden, wenn die Situation bedrohlich wird, ohne daß die Königl. Regierung bis dahin Schiffe in die dortigen Gewässer senden könnte. Im Inneren des Landes werden die Fremden wie bisher die Gefahr des selbstgewählten Aufenthalts tragen müssen.<sup>134</sup>

Notwithstanding, in April 1867, Friedrich von Gerolt, German Chargé d'affaires in Washington, reported to Bismarck his attempts to get a commitment from the United States to protect the Prussians in México.<sup>135</sup> Even though apparently a positive answer was insinuated by William Seward—Secretary of State of the United States—<sup>136</sup> in reality, as late as December 1867 the North American diplomat in México, Lee Plumb, had not received official instructions in regards to the representation of the Prussians.<sup>137</sup> This means that for the Germans living in México there was a vacuum in diplomatic support.

One needs to add other factors to try to figure out what the situation of the Villa Carlotas was: First, the Prussian states had officially discouraged immigration to México, and did not favor the Second Empire's plan to colonize Yucatán. Second, the Mexican land ownership was ambiguous by stating that foreigners obtaining land in the country were considered legally as Mexican, without further solid clarification. Third, the colonists had freely entered into a contract individually and directly with the Second Empire, accepting its full economical support. Fourth, that Yucatán was still quite distant and isolated from

<sup>133</sup> Besides KÜHN 1965, I have consulted the following records at GStPK: Hauptabteilung I, no. 77, 226 -227; Hauptabteilung I, no. 89, 14856, 15693, 16493; Hauptabteilung III, 2.4.1, no. 7917, 7930-7931, 14549.

<sup>134</sup> Bismarck to Magnus, printed in full by KÜHN 1965, p. 135.

<sup>135</sup> Gerolt to Bismarck, Washington, Apr. 2, 1867, GStPK, Hauptabteilung III, 2.4.1, I, no. 7917, fol. 234.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibidem*, fol. 235; *idem* to *idem*, Washington, Aug. 16, 1867, *ibidem*, fol. 245.

<sup>137</sup> Scholler to Bismarck, México City, Dec. 28, 1867, *ibidem*, fol. 247.

the Mexican capital. And fifth, that the settlers took up arms to defend the Monarchy. Being in such an uncertain position in the midst of a civil war, it appears that the colonists were left to manage on their own.

By February 1867 Yucatán itself could not expect to get any external aid. The French had evacuated México City and Maximilian had led part of his remaining army to Querétaro. Just a few weeks later, in March, the last French troops were evacuated from the port of Veracruz. On February 21 Tommasek wrote to Salazar Ilarregui that he and his troops had arrived in the town of Umán, searching for the Republicans, who were probably in the hacienda Maxcanú.<sup>138</sup> He signed the letter as Commander and Director of the Fuerza Armada Alemana, and referred to Carlos Young as Captain Young.<sup>139</sup> Meanwhile, friar Garma, padre Ortegón's assistant, was sent by this last one to Santa Elena for what he thought were going to be just a few weeks. Actually, Garma ended up staying until the end of the war in the village,<sup>140</sup> given that also in February Ticul was taken by the Republicans and became from that point on a scenario of multiple fights.<sup>141</sup> The seaports of Sisal and Campeche had the same fate.<sup>142</sup>

In light of the rapid advance of the Republicans, Salazar Ilarregui took over the function of General Military Commander of Yucatán on April 1, and declared the entire department under siege.<sup>143</sup> By then, Tommasek had left for New York, and it is unclear who took over the command of the Fuerza Armada Alemana.<sup>144</sup> Also in April, Bureau reported to Salazar Ilarregui that Veracruz was unable to supply Yucatán with money, because the port itself had been paralyzed for weeks. Not even a month later, Veracruz was under siege too and, according to Bureau, could fall to the Republicans at any time.<sup>145</sup>

The war conditions made the cultivation of crops difficult, to travel was practically impossible and food became scarce.<sup>146</sup> The horrors and crimes usually committed during war time spread out throughout the peninsula. During the duration of the siege it is likely

<sup>138</sup> The town of Maxcanú, which also has a hacienda, is located circa 50 kilometers south of Umán.

<sup>139</sup> [T: Commander and Director of the German Armed Forces]. Tommasek to Salazar Ilarregui, Umán, Feb. 21, 1867, UTAL, SIP, GA 210, folder 23, fol. 11.

<sup>140</sup> Ortegón to Guerra, Ticul, Jan. 8, 1867, AHAY, vol. 40, 1866-1867; Guerra to Ortegón, Mérida, June 25, 1867, *ibidem*, vol. 18, 1865-1866.

<sup>141</sup> SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, pp. 149, 151; MOLINA SOLIS 1921, pp. 404-409.

<sup>142</sup> MOLINA SOLIS 1921, pp. 404-409.

<sup>143</sup> SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, pp. 154-155.

<sup>144</sup> Tommasek to Salazar Ilarregui, Mérida, Mar. 24, 1867, UTAL, SIP, GA 210, folder 23.

<sup>145</sup> Bureau to Salazar Ilarregui, Veracruz, Apr. 14, 1867, CAIHY, XLVII, 1864, 3/3, 88; *idem* to *idem*, Veracruz, May 4, 1867, *ibidem*, 3/3, 089.

<sup>146</sup> SÁNCHEZ NOVELO 1983, pp. 151-156.

that the German families left behind in the villages did not receive much support from the regime. Before leaving for New York, Tommasek had left three promissory notes to a person in Mérida, with instructions to present them to Salazar Ilarregui for payment and to distribute the money among the Villa Carlottans. But only one of them was satisfied,<sup>147</sup> probably meaning that the Germans were not provided with cash, perhaps neither with food supplies, after that date. Referring in general to the inhabitants of Santa Elena, wrote padre Ortégón months later full of grief, that during the war they had suffered all kinds of shortages, diseases and horrors. And that many had died.<sup>148</sup>

By May, Querétaro had fallen and Maximilian had been captured. In the peninsula, Campeche had been taken by the Republicans, who reinforced their attacks on Mérida, which surrendered on June 15, after a 55 day long siege during which the fights were so brutal that "bullets were fired so rapidly and from all directions ... that there was not even a chance to bury the death."<sup>149</sup> Under terms one to three of the Second Empire's capitulation, Salazar Ilarregui negotiated from the Republicans to respect the life and freedom of those who fought for the Second Empire, as well as to provide them with passports to leave the country.<sup>150</sup> He himself left for New York via Havana a few days later. Additionally, it appears that among those he got protection for were at least part of the members of the Fuerza Armada Alemana. Returning to Mérida in 1875, the former colonist Friedrich Lampart declared that he had been drafted as a soldier by the Imperial regime and fought in Mérida where he, along with other German colonists, had served until June 15, 1867. According to Lampart's recollection, it was on that same day that "it was decided that we [the colonists] should leave for New York," adding that the order was to depart immediately, barely giving them time to pass through Santa Elena to pick up their families and from there travel directly to the seaport.<sup>151</sup>

What situation did the colonists left behind in Yucatán have to face? Recapping: By the end of June 1867, the Second Empire had collapsed and México was again a Republic. A new Republican administration took over the government at all levels. Almost immediately after that, the search and harassment of those suspected of having supported

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<sup>147</sup> R. C[a?]ntón to Tommasek, Mérida, July 1st, 1867, UTAL, SIP, GA 210, folder 23.

<sup>148</sup> Ortégón to the Archdiocese, Ticul, Aug. 4, 1867, AHAY, vol. 40, 1866-1867.

<sup>149</sup> MOLINA SOLIS 1921, p. 409.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 409-410.

<sup>151</sup> Federico Lampart to the Juez Primero, Mérida, May 7, 1875, AGEY, JC, Tutelas, vol. 202, exp. 11.

the Monarchical project began. Friedrich Gerstäcker, who visited México shortly after the fall of the Empire, described some of the problems faced by foreign aliens as follows:

Einen ziemlich harten Stand haben jetzt in Mexiko die angesiedelten Fremden, denn sie sind der Willkür mexikanischer Beamten vollkommen preisgegeben, und keine Stelle in der Welt, bei der sie gegen Ungerechtigkeiten protestieren können; denn wenn auch fast sämtliche Nationalitäten gegenwärtig unter den Schutz des amerikanischen Konsulats gestellt sind, so würde es der Union doch nie einfallen, eher als es ihr selber paßt, einen Krieg mit Mexiko anzufangen, weil vielleicht ein Franzose oder Deutscher von irgend einem Beamten schlecht und unrecht behandelt wurde. Alle Fremden sind deshalb gegenwärtig, wie gerade die Sachen stehen, auf Gnade und Ungnade den Mexikanern preisgegeben, und es ist dabei gar nicht abzusehen, wann in diesem Zustand eine Änderung eintreten kann.<sup>152</sup>

Given that Gerstäcker had traveled worldwide, could compare the living conditions of several communities, and was not affiliated with nor depended on the support of any particular group while in México, he was probably able to evaluate the situation with relative objectivity. This problematic becomes clearer when considering that by virtue of a national decree issue in July 1867, the *matrículas de extranjero* (residency permits), issued by the Second Empire, as well as those of citizens of nations who had recognized and supported the Monarchy, were declared invalid for certain legal procedures.<sup>153</sup>

Already in July, 1867, the new Governor of Yucatán reported in a letter to President Juárez his advances against "those, who degraded themselves to support the foreign invaders,"<sup>154</sup> meaning those who represented or aided the Second Empire in Yucatán. The newly issued official Republican newspaper, *La razón del pueblo*, began a campaign against the "betrayers," and reported generously about the executions of the "enemies."<sup>155</sup> Newly named officials in main towns, such as Ticul, had to submit a list of all those who collaborated with the Imperialists. The Villa Carlota's were identified as advocates of the Empire.<sup>156</sup> On August 5, a decree from the Republican governor of Yucatán appeared in *La razón del pueblo*. In it, it is stated that the German farmers, who were sponsored by the

<sup>152</sup> GERSTÄCKER n.a., p. 397.

<sup>153</sup> Decreto, México City, July 23, 1867, Biblioteca Nacional de México (hereafter cited as BNM), Colección La Fragua, 417, LAF.

<sup>154</sup> Manuel Cepeda, Gobernador de Yucatán to Benito Juárez, Presidente de México, Mérida, July 1, 1867, BNM, Archivo Juárez, MsJ 16-2474, 1877.

<sup>155</sup> *La razón del pueblo* (hereafter cited as *Lrp*), see the issues from June and July, 1867.

<sup>156</sup> M. Alcalá to the Jefe Político de Ticul, Mérida, Aug. 1, 1867, AGEY, M-T, c. 17, v. 24, e. 1.

"so-called" Empire, had allegedly abandoned the houses constructed with public money for them in Santa Elena and Pustunich. A timeframe of a month was given to claim property rights on them. After that, the houses would be considered as state property and put up for sale in an auction.<sup>157</sup>

Even though some of the Villa Carlottans left for New York in June, and from there moved to other states or went back to Germany, others were in fact still in Yucatán. Some of those who stayed did so willingly, but others were left stranded. A few women who married locals remained in Santa Elena and in Mérida. On March 16, 1884, the German geologist Carl Sapper visited briefly Santa Elena, and he mentioned:

jetzt befinden sich nur noch zwei Frauen aus jener Zeit in S. Elena, nämlich Frau Scholz und Friederike Dietrich. Ich hätte gern mit denselben über die Schicksale der Colonie geplaudert, wenn meine Zeit nicht allzu beschränkt gewesen wäre.<sup>158</sup>

Some German families decided to stay too. Two colonists, Luis Eckelt and August Hempel, appeared to the authorities and claimed their houses, which were given back to them, with the only condition that they would inhabit them.<sup>159</sup> But for others, not leaving in June had terrible consequences.

On August 10, 1867, an open letter appeared in the official newspaper.<sup>160</sup> In it Emilio MacKinney—a well known meridano merchant, probably son of immigrants—appeals to the charity and compassion of people to help the Germans who were left behind in the port of Sisal. He narrates that the former colonists somehow had scraped together enough money to pay for their own overseas transportation. The ship's captain allegedly took the money and possessions from the colonists and quickly departed, leaving the Germans behind with nothing at all. MacKinney says that the foreigners were homeless, barely wearing rags, hungry, sick, and dying on the streets, and that no one was willing to come to their aid. The author reminds the readers that these immigrants were once invited to come to Yucatán and received with generosity and kindness in this same seaport. MacKinney asks people urgently to help the former colonists. Given the tone and

<sup>157</sup> Decree, *Lrp*, Aug. 5, 1867.

<sup>158</sup> Carl SAPPER, 1897, *Das nördliche Mittel-Amerika. Nebst einem Ausflug nach dem Hochland von Anahuac. Reisen [...]* (Braunschweig: Vieweg und Sohn), p. 144.

<sup>159</sup> Cepeda Peraza to the Jefe Político de Ticul, Oct. 10, 1867, AGEY, M-T, c. 15, v. 21, e. 2.

<sup>160</sup> Remitido, *Lrp*, Aug. 14, 1867. I thank Emiliano Canto Mayén for facilitating this information.

content of the letter, it appears that locals refused to help the Germans, fearing being accused of collaborating with the "enemy."

Apparently this note caused some reactions. In a letter to President Juárez, a man who identified himself as Bernabé Escalante, a Yucatecan living in Veracruz, expressed his opinion against allowing the European colonists to stay in Yucatán.<sup>161</sup> He based his opinion on two arguments. The first one being that "the European presence dominates Yucatán", an argument which is not valid, considering that not even two years before there were only 318 Europeans registered in Yucatán—which had then a population of 248,115 inhabitants—based on a report from the Prefecto Político.<sup>162</sup> And this number, according to the Yucatecan official, already included the German colonists who had arrived in 1865. The second quarrel of Escalante was that the advantages given to these Europeans placed them in more favorable position than the locals. He suggested that they should be compensated and left free to go somewhere else, but, if there were some who wanted to live among the Mexicans "without special privileges," they could do so. The content and tone of this communication reveals some similarities with the arguments of the Yucatecan elite against colonists, and it shows some of the mechanisms which were used to reject them.

But it appears that MacKinney's letter could have also facilitated other actions: In September 5, 1867, Consul Kruttschnitt reported from New Orleans to Baron von Gerolt that:

Einige deutsche Familien welche sich in Y[u?]natan angesiedelt hatten, sind vor einigen Tagen als Flüchtlinge hier her gekommen, nach dem sie alle möglichen Mißhandlungen, ihrer Aussage nach, erfahren hatten. Sie befinden sich natürlich in den allerdürftigsten Umständen.<sup>163</sup>

That adds up the number of families who could make it to the United States and, occasionally, back to Germany, as some records located confirm. What is also beyond doubt is the fact that a few families stayed in Mérida, among them the Dietrichs, the

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<sup>161</sup> Bernabé Escalante to Benito Juárez, Minatitlán, Aug. 29, 1867, BNM, Archivo Juárez, MsJ 7-2715, 1867.

<sup>162</sup> José García Morales, Mérida, Dec. 1865, CAIHY, L, 1865, 3/4, 035, p. 7r.

<sup>163</sup> Kruttschnitt, Königlicher Preußischer Konsul in New Orleans, to Baron von Gerolt, New Orleans, Sept. 5, 1867, GStPK, Hauptabteilung III, 2.4.1, I, no. 7917, fol. 247 sv.



Zeidlers, and the Worbis, as several official records show. But it is unlikely that they did so out of greed and ambition, as some writers suggest.<sup>164</sup>

#### **F. Factors Contributing to Villa Carlota's Failure**

The fall of the Second Empire was also the collapse of Villa Carlota. But without a doubt there were other factors contributing to its break down. Despite the fact that the selection of the colonists seems to have been conducted with reasonable efficiency, and that the regime supported the project not only in word but also in deed, there wasn't enough time for the colonies to solidify. Even though the organization of the colony did not work out so well right at the start, when one considers other German settlements in Latin America, such as Pozuzo, that does not seem abnormal. And, besides, some improvement was already beginning to show.

There is little to say about Pustunich as a site, in light of the short time during which the colony existed there. However, the conditions for agriculture could be presumed as more favorable, considering that there are no large amounts of limestone in that area. Santa Elena as a location for the settlement apparently had some positive aspects: The change and adaptation of the different cultural groups seemed to be going well. By considering the traditional measures of acculturation, it appears that the newcomers and the dominant culture were on the way to integration. Actually, even now in the twenty-first century, quite a few modern states would wish for themselves such a rapid acculturation process. Nevertheless, the settlement was not located in a place where the Germans could have stayed in the long run, given the limitations set by the climatic and geological conditions of the region, which were not conducive to large scale agricultural production. Documental evidence seems to point out to a mistake made by the testing and selection of the site. At first, it could be possible to label it as excess of faith in the ability of "civilization" to overcome all natural obstacles, typical for the nineteenth century in Latin America, arguing that there was a lack of knowledge and respect for the Maya agricultural traditions and an unrealistic perception of the characteristics of the region. Although that is partly true, the conditions seemed to have been more complex than that, pointing additionally to lack of infrastructure, political rivalries at state level, resistance and fear of

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<sup>164</sup> The myth of the greatly desirous, eager immigrants has been cultivated by the reports of several writers. See for example REED 1964, p. 233.

change on part of the Yucatecan elite, some shortcomings on part of the colonists themselves to get properly organized, and administrative failures.

It appears that the terratenientes' rejection of the program reduced the options of sites available for colonization. At this point it cannot be discarded that the elite manipulated the situation to force the colonists to be installed in locations where they could create a protective barrier for their haciendas against the *cruzoob*. The files related to contemporary land disputes deposited in several archives show a large number of cases of allegedly fraudulent encroaching of lands on part of hacendados, investigations of apparently non-bona fide transactions, and proprietors who, claiming ownership to more land that could be proved by their deeds, interposed legal actions. All of that could have paralyzed the survey and distribution process of large land extensions. In light of the problems created for Villa Carlota because of the inappropriateness of the land for large scale cultivation, it would be interesting to carry out an analysis based on land legal procedures and tenancy records.

Without a doubt what played a major role in Villa Carlota's breakdown was the political aspect of the project. First of all, being a project championed by Salazar Ilarregui it was already in disadvantaged from the start, given that part of the elite refused to support a non-Yucatecan as Imperial Commissioner. Besides perceiving the colonization project with Germans as an imposition of the central system, the Yucatecan elites were interested in gaining manpower, laborers, and not in helping to create a middle class. Within the same lines, the upper class was indifferent to the idea of contributing to the creation of better living conditions for the peaceful *indígenas*. For the oligarchy, the Maya were just fine if they could be servants or peones, and the other ones, the *cruzoob*, should be eliminated. Anything above and beyond probably appeared to them as superfluous.

And how to explain that the memories about the colony have been manipulated or suppressed so many years? First of all, until recently, both in México and in Yucatán, anything done by the Second Empire could be demonized, but not openly evaluated. Second, the documents about this episode were written in various languages, by different levels of authorities, and ended up being housed in archives in several countries. And third, to analyze such colonization project demands an intercultural interdisciplinary approach.

But even if excluded from the official story of Yucatán for a long time, if one digs deep enough, it is possible to find quite a few pieces of the puzzle, as I hope I have been

able to provide evidence for: In censuses, court cases and registers; in archives and books not previously consulted for this purpose; in the forgotten correspondence of a rural clergyman; or in the stories still going around in Santa Elena and Pustunich about *le chak ma'ako'obo'*, *le ma'axoob ma' anchaj ma'alob kool tio'obi*, *tumen ma' tu chi'impolte ba'alamo'obo'*.<sup>165</sup> Where one sometimes runs into children with blue eyes and blond hair, or people who instead of *aguardiente*<sup>166</sup> say *Schnapps*.



Figure 6. Santa Elena's Downtown Area, 2003. Photograph by Stephan Merk.

<sup>165</sup> [T: The red-skin men who did not have a good harvest. They failed because they did not ask in advance, following the appropriate rituals, for permission from the "balams," the protecting Gods of the earth, to cultivate the land]. I thank Santiago Domínguez Covoh for his assistance by this translation.

<sup>166</sup> An alcoholic beverage made from sugar cane.

## **V. Conclusion**

Taking as point of departure the different narratives built around the German colonists in Yucatán, I became interested in exploring whether some parts of them could be supported, challenged or discarded by documental information.

The objective of this thesis has been to identify the characteristics, objectives and organization of this particular group migration within the context of the Second Mexican Empire in Yucatán. I have structured this analysis in a thematic-chronological manner, beginning with a historical review of the Mexican ideology, programs and efforts to attract immigrants from the National period to the Second Mexican Empire, then moving on to inquire about the socio-economic characteristics of the German colonists as a group, and proceeding to delineate a profile of the receiving society. Towards the end of my analysis, I reconstructed the life and collapse of the German settlements in Yucatán.

By structuring the material in this way I have been able to show the interplay of the social, political, economical and cultural spheres in the creation and breakdown of the colonies. Given that the details of Villa Carlota itself have been clearly explored in the previous pages, I will summarize in this concluding chapter the findings of my work: First, as regards the main facts about Villa Carlota itself, to then, secondly, explore the larger implications these findings could have for the history of immigration and colonization in México. As a final note, I suggest a few themes in which additional inquiries appear as productive and possible to explore.

### **The Villa Carlota Colonization Program**

1. Notwithstanding some gaps, it was possible to reconstruct a good part of the background and history of both German settlements in Yucatán during the Second Mexican Empire.
2. Major discrepancies were found between the previously printed accounts regarding the German-speaking colonists and the findings exposed in this thesis. This refers to the literature written in German and Spanish language, not only during the nineteenth century but newer accounts generated in the twentieth century. Large parts of those narratives have been challenged, sometimes even discarded, based on documental evidence.

3. The Second Mexican Empire had set as a goal to colonize the Yucatán peninsula with approximately 600 European families of farmers and artisans per year with multiple objectives from the Monarchical perspective: To "regenerate" México, as per the French Interventionists agenda; to improve agricultural techniques and to jump-start the regional economy; to create a middle class of landowners; and to make out of Yucatán the center of what Maximilian envisioned as his *Mexican Reich*. The program was cut short, among other reasons, by the collapse of the Mexican Monarchy.
4. Villa Carlota was the name of the project founded in Yucatán. It was formed by two German settlements, located in the Maya villages of Santa Elena and Pustunich. 443 German-speaking settlers, mostly families of farmers and artisans, lived there from 1865 until 1867. Some of the colonists were Protestant.
5. The following three characteristics are special about Villa Carlota: (1) It was probably the first case of subsidized migration in México; (2) besides a defense function, a "double civilizing mission"—meaning to "civilize" the indígenas and to "educate" the Hispanic Yucatecan elite—were assigned to it; and (3), the colonists were settled within existing Maya communities, providing many opportunities for intercultural contact.
6. Notwithstanding all challenges, and contrary to what has been presumed, documental evidence shows that miscegenation occurred and an acculturation process had begun.
7. After having evaluated a vast array of facts, it seems highly unlikely that the colonists were driven away by the villagers.
8. Passive—and perhaps active—opposition from the Yucatecan elite to the project, the inappropriateness of the cultivation tracts for the purposes assigned to the settlements, organizational problems amongst the colonists themselves, and the fall of the Second Empire were some of the most important factors leading to the collapse of the program.
9. Contrary to what has been assumed, documental evidence shows that even in spite of the civil war, the Imperial regime honored to the extent of its capabilities the commitment it had made to the German colonists.

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**México's History of Immigration and Colonization**

10. The main leader of the Villa Carlota project was Imperial Commissioner José Salazar Ilarregui, a Mexican, which confirms that during the Second Empire national officials also participated in high ranking positions, were assigned large responsibilities and given enough freedom to carry them. México was not being run, as Francisco de Paula de Arrangoiz alleged, "from Paris and in the French way."
11. The colonization policy of the Second Empire does not appear to have been a disconnected, alien to the history and requirements of México's attempt to populate the country: It actually responded to ideology and needs that had been embedded in Mexican society since the early National period.
12. Immigration and Colonization during the French Intervention and the Second Empire can not be nonchalantly dismissed as insignificant in a long term perspective for three reasons: (1) As heretofore shown, their policy development and project execution built on México's prior lessons and experiences; (2) their intended colonization strategies, as well as the programs which unfolded, had a liberal tone; (3) the results of some of those efforts have been overlooked or manipulated in order to influence the colonization policy followed during the Porfiriato.
13. It is not possible to generalize that all colonization projects of the Second Empire were disorganized or never concretized. Villa Carlota was not a project: It was actually a carried out program. It was planned and executed with a reasonable amount of responsibility, within the limits of the capacity of their organizers, those imposed by different interest-groups, and the state's budget. It basically faced the same challenges that any other project carried out in México during the second part of the nineteenth century.

**Newer Realms**

Given the objective set for this thesis, as well as due to the sources and method selected to conduct it, some themes could only be glimpsed at. It will be worthwhile to approach a few of them stating other research questions and by using different methodological approaches.

First of all, Villa Carlota provides an unique opportunity—not often forehanded—to carry out research on the processes of acculturation following early contact in aspects such as the cultural significance and usage of the *compadre* mechanism, and the transfer of knowledge—or its resistance—in regards to agricultural methods, for example. Also the possibility of comparative analysis is interesting, taking as subjects other failed or successful colonies in Latin America, several of which have been well studied and documented. Also related to this theme would be to approach in detail the relationship of the II Empire's Indigenist policy and its colonization efforts.

The existence of several legal files documenting the interactions of several German colonists and the Yucatecan legal system can shed light into some of the challenges brought about from two perspectives: On the one hand, onto the settlers by the adjustment to a new environment, while, on the other hand, it could make it possible to analyze how the legal institutions and their representatives reacted to newer summons.

The role of the Catholic Church in the development of these settlements definitely deserves a few more pages. It would be also interesting to explore if documental evidence, such as tenancy records, provides proof of an active opposition from the elite to the Villa Carlota colonization program.

An analysis of the "civilization vs. nature" theme in the official contemporary rhetoric could bring interesting results, as well as a reflection on what I have called the "double civilizing mission" assigned to the colonists.

As shown, the story of the German colonists in Yucatán has been re-scripted in several ways during the past 140 years. Those narratives had been until now almost exclusively based on information obtained through second hand reminiscences. Although containing a very small amount of veracity when contrasted against documental evidence, these large discrepancies are *per se* interesting too: How were those selective reconstructions generated? Who remembered, with which intentions and consequences? Is it possible to identify time periods of continuity and/or change? These questions could be answered not only looking for an interpretation of the discourse made popular during the Porfiriato, but also after 1980—when the alleged German mummified corpses were found in the town's church—and well into the present time, when Santa Elena is attempting to market itself as a tourist attraction and is starting to receive a few busloads of German-speaking Neckermann tourists every week. Seeing this rapid change, I have already

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conducted a series of interviews in Santa Elena, Pustunich and Mérida during my yearly sessions in the peninsula, from 2003 to 2006, which could be analyzed in the context of a different research question.

Two additional interesting themes would be to document the fate of some of the former members of Villa Carlota on both sides of the ocean, and to analyze which role the existence of these colonies had in the construction of a group identity in Santa Elena and Pustunich. Likewise, a monograph about Arthur Schott remains pending, as well as one about the works of the Scientific Commission of Yucatán.

But perhaps the largest assignments would be to attempt to evaluate anew México's colonization efforts during the National Period, incorporating the Second Empire, and to revisit what we assume about the German presence in México during that time.

In spite of whatever shortcomings my analysis may have, I hope to have contributed to a reflection about how we select and construct our images of the world, and to a better understanding of how, when we write about migration, we are in reality writing about the expectations and fears of social groups at a certain point in time.



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## Functionaries Involved in the Second Mexican Empire's Colonization Program in Yucatán (1864-1867)

### Emperor

#### Ministers of Fomento

◊ José Salazar Ilarregui	13.06.64 - 21.08.64
José Ma. Ruiz	21.08.64 - 18.10.64
Luis Robles Pezuela	18.10.64 - 03.03.66
Francisco Somera	03.03.66 - 26.06.66
* José Salazar Ilarregui	26.07.66 - 14.09.66
Joaquín de Mier y Terán	14.09.66 - 19.03.67
José María Iribarren	19.03.67 - 15.05.67

#### Imperial Commissioners for Yucatán

José Salazar Ilarregui	09.04.64 - 03.03.66
Domingo Bureau	03.03.66 - 24.10.66
José Domingo Sosa (substitute)	24.10.66 - 09.11.66
José Salazar Ilarregui	09.11.66 - 15.06.67

◊ Also during the Regency (21.06.63 - 12.06.64)

\* Also Minister of Gobernación (03.03.66 - 24.10.66)

#### Prefectos Políticos of Yucatán

Felipe Navarrete	1863-1864
José María García Morales	Sep. 1864 - Dec. 1864
David Cásares (substitute)	Dec. 1864 - Feb. 1865
Ignacio Lozano (substitute)	Mar. 1865
José María García Morales	Mar. 1865 - July 1865
José María Adalid	July 1865
José María García Morales	Aug. 1865 - Sept. 1866
José Domingo Sosa	Oct. 1866 - Dec. 1866
José María García Morales	Dec. 1866 - Jan. 1867
Pantaleón Barrera	Jan. 1867 - June 1867

#### Subprefectos of Ticul

Francisco D. González	1863 - 1864
Pantaleón Barrera	1865
Antonio Barrera (substitute)	1865
Pedro Alcantara Heredia	1866 - 1867
Santiago Espejo (substitute)	1866

#### Jueces de Paz of Santa Elena

Desiderio Lizárraga	1852 - n.a.
Romano Negrón, 2nd.	Dec. 1864 - n.a.
Ramón Jiménez, substitute	Dec. 1864 - n.a.

#### Comisarios of Pustunich

Manuel Guerrero	1864 - n.a.
Saturnino Ojeda	1865 - n.a.

Source: Data adapted from CANTO MAYÉN 2006, p. 258; DICCIONARIO PORRÚA 1968, vol. 2, pp. 1225-1226, and various documents consulted at the AGEY, AHAY and CAIHY.

## Chronology

### 1863

International	México/Yucatán	Villa Carlota
<b>Longer time frame</b>		
— American Civil War (1861-1865)	— French Intervention in México (Nov. 12, 1862 - Jun. 25, 1863). — Second Mexican Empire: Preparatory phase under General Forey (Sept. 26, 1862-Jun. 25, 1863).	
<b>May</b>		
	31 Republican President Juárez leaves México City.	
<b>June</b>		
10 In Trieste, the Crown of México is offered to Archduke Maximilian.	10 Proclamation of the Mexican Empire. 21 Salazar Ilarregui appointed Minister of Fomento. 26 Beginning of the Regency.	
<b>December</b>		
	— Yucatán declares itself in favor of the Regency and the Second Empire.	

### 1864

International	México/Yucatán	Villa Carlota
<b>Longer time frame</b>		
— German-Danish War (Jan. 16-Oct. 30) — Paraguayan War against Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina (until 1870).		
<b>April</b>		
10 In Trieste, Archduke Maximilian accepts the Crown of México.		
<b>May</b>		
	28 Emperor Maximilian arrives in Veracruz, México.	
<b>July</b>		
	31 Salazar Ilarregui is appointed Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán. Receives specific written instructions from Maximilian, including several articles about colonization.	10-12 Salazar Ilarregui presents a colonization plan to Maximilian. 18 Salazar Ilarregui inquires about land available for colonization in Yucatán.
<b>September</b>		
— Given the advances of the Unionists in the American Civil War, negotiations are being started for the immigration of Confederates into México. The discussion is polemic.	4 Salazar Ilarregui takes office as Imperial Commissioner. 30 Salazar Ilarregui modifies the Law of Recruitment, attempting to protect the indígenas.	

<b>October</b>		
	14 Salazar Ilarregui appoints an Abogado Defensor de los Indígenas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salazar Ilarregui holds meetings with the Yucatecan elite, attempting to win their support for the colonization of Yucatán.</li> <li>Schott and Hübbe are appointed to search and test possible sites for the German colonies in Yucatán.</li> </ul>
<b>November</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Republican uprising in Tabasco.</li> </ul> 25 Salazar Ilarregui attempts a dialog with the cruzoob, sending a message in Maya and Spanish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tzucacab is selected as a site for the first German settlement in Yucatán.</li> </ul> 25 Von Hippel departs for Germany to recruit colonists. 28 Tzucacab is attacked by the cruzoob.
<b>December</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiations between the Mexican Second Empire and the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church from the Vatican break down.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An attack against the cruzoob starts to be prepared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The government acknowledges that the Yucatecan elite opposes to the colonization of the peninsula with Germans.</li> </ul>

**1865**

<b>International</b>	<b>México/Yucatán</b>	<b>Villa Carlota</b>
<b>Longer time frame</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is reported that thousands of Confederate refugees are already crossing the borders into México.</li> <li>Spanish War against Perú, Chile, Ecuador and Bolivia (until 1871).</li> </ul>		
<b>February</b>		
	2 Law of Tolerance of Religions is issued (México City).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The search for cultivatable tracts in Yucatán continues.</li> </ul>
<b>March</b>		
	28 Establishment of the Junta de Colonización (México City). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Junta de Inspección de Tierras is formed (México City).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministerium des Inneren in Prussia starts to receive inquiries about the reliability of Yucatán's colonization project. Bismarck is informed about it. A specific prohibition is not issued.</li> </ul>
<b>April</b>		
9 End of the American Civil War. The Unionists win over the Confederates. 15 President Lincoln is killed. Johnson takes over.	10 The Estatuto Provisional del Imperio Mexicano is issued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific warnings against Yucatán's colonization project start to be published in several newspapers in Germany.</li> </ul>
<b>May</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The United States does not recognize the Second Mexican Empire. It offers its support to President Benito Juárez and the Republicans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pro-Republican uprising in Champotón (Campeche).</li> <li>Discussions about the immigration of Confederate refugees, and of non-Caucasian</li> </ul>	

	peoples are carried on in México City.	
<b>June</b>		
— The United States disapproves of México accepting Confederate refugees.	— Commodore Maury is appointed Imperial Commissioner of Colonization.	
<b>July</b>		
	4 Junta de Inspección de Tierras is appointed (Yucatán).	— Difficulties in finding land for the colonists in Yucatán continue.
<b>August</b>		
		24 The first group of settlers departs out of Hamburg for Sisal on board the "San Luis."
<b>September</b>		
	5 Colonization Law is issued (México City).	— Von Hippel leaves Hamburg for Yucatán.
<b>October</b>		
		3 The town of Becanchén is selected for colonization. 23 First group of settlers arrive to the port of Sisal, Yucatán. 25 Change of location: Instead of Becanchén, it is decided that Santa Elena will be the site of the first settlement. — Preparations begin for receiving the colonists: House constructions starts, wells are repaired, etc. 26 Colonists arrive in Mérida.
<b>November</b>		
	— Civil Registry Law is re-confirmed by Maximilian. 1 Labor Law and legislation assigning land and water to the indígenas are issued. 22 Charlotte visits the peninsula of Yucatán (until Dec. 11).	2 Colonists leave Mérida for Ticul. 5 Colonists arrive in Ticul. 12 Colonists in Santa Elena. 17 Escolástico Contreras is appointed School Teacher of Santa Elena.
<b>December</b>		
10 Leopold I, King of the Belgians, father of Charlotte, dies.	— Pro-republican uprisings in Campeche (state).	— Padre Ortegón starts to visit Villa Carlota regularly. Receives requests for conversions and baptisms.

**1866**

<b>International</b>	<b>México/Yucatán</b>	<b>Villa Carlota</b>
<b>January</b>		
Napoleon III considers withdrawing the French troops from México.		— Measles epidemic in Santa Elena (until March).
<b>February</b>		
12 USA demands that the French retract out of México.		14 Housing-construction for the Germans is complete.

<b>March</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Republicans occupy almost half of the country.</li> <li>— Public opinion is against subsidized migration (México City).</li> <li>— Junta Auxiliar Protectora de las Clases Menesterosas is appointed (Yucatán)</li> </ul> <p>3 Salazar Ilarregui appointed Minister of Gobernación.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Santa Elena's streets are given a new nomenclature.</li> </ul>
	24 Domingo Bureau, new Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán, arrives. Tensions with the Yucatecan elite worsen.	
<b>May</b>		
<p>6 USA officials protest against the recruitment of a second Austrian Volunteer Corps for México.</p> <p>31 Napoleon III announces the recall of the French Army from México.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Bureau reports a deficit in the Yucatecan budget.</li> <li>— Maximilian cancels the Imperial Ministry of Colonization (México City). Immigration is taken out of the media's agenda.</li> <li>— Cholera epidemic in Sisal.</li> </ul>	<p>15 Second group of settlers departs from Hamburg to Sisal on board the "San Luis."</p> <p>18 Domingo Bureau visits Villa Carlota. Reports his impressions to Charlotte and to the Minister of Fomento.</p>
<b>June</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Republicans advance in the northern states.</li> </ul> <p>12 Buenaventura Martínez pronounces against the Second Empire in Mocochoá (Yucatán).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Bureau and the Minister of Fomento correspond about founding more German settlements in Yucatán.</li> <li>— Pustunich is chosen as location for the second site.</li> <li>— Civil Registry of Santa Elena starts to function.</li> <li>— During this semester, the colonists of Villa Carlota begin to organize themselves.</li> </ul>
<b>July</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Evacuation of French troops starts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Republicans hold the principal seaports and border towns in the north of the country; the Empire loses its tax-revenues.</li> <li>— Cholera epidemic in Sisal.</li> </ul> <p>26 The Second Empire goes into its Conservative phase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Cholera epidemic in Santa Elena.</li> </ul> <p>11 Second group of settlers arrives to Sisal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Not having enough houses ready for the second group of settlers, part of them lives in Pustunich's Church. The Archdiocese of Yucatán approves of it.</li> </ul> <p>25 The colonist Reichert gets killed.</p>
<b>August</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— More pro-republican uprisings in the state of Campeche.</li> <li>— The cruzoob set Tihosuco (Yucatán) under siege.</li> </ul>	<p>12 A group of 36 heads of family sends a request to the Imperial Commissioner, asking to be relocated or send back to Germany.</p> <p>19 The colonist Friederike Dietrich marries Mauro Antonio Machado, a native of Santa Elena.</p>

		28 The colonist Friedrich Reiche is elected Alcalde (Mayor) of Villa Carlota.
<b>September</b>		
— Bismarck decides that his government will not carry out an evacuation of Prussian citizens from Imperial Mexico.	— Pro-republican uprisings in Tabasco. — Fights in Isla del Carmen and in the state of Campeche.	1 Friedrich Reiche attempts to step down as Alcalde of Villa Carlota.
<b>October</b>		
	— Republican uprisings in Hunucma, Sisal and Halachó (Yucatán).	6 Moritz von Hippel steps down as Director of Villa Carlota. 8 Pablo Tommasek takes over as Director of Villa Carlota. — The colonists Christoph Heinze and August Franke are appointed respectively as Police Commander and School Teacher of Villa Carlota.
<b>November</b>		
	10 Salazar Ilarregui takes office again as Imperial Commissioner for Yucatán.	— Padre Ortigón complains that part of the German colonists is still living in Pustunich's church.
<b>December</b>		
— Austrian and Belgian Volunteer Corps are disbanded.		
<b>During this year</b>		
		— 32 Germans were baptized into/converted to the Catholic religion. — There were several cases of disciplinary problems and aggressiveness amongst the colonists. — 12 colonists ran away. — A few colonists and/or families were relocated or allowed to work in other locations.

**1867**

<b>International</b>	<b>México/Yucatán</b>	<b>Villa Carlota</b>
<b>January</b>		
	— The cruzob intensify their attacks. Other groups, which until then had remained peaceful, join them in Yucatán. 17 Mérida is under siege by the Republican forces.	17 A series of classified ads begin to be published in the official newspaper, offering the services of the German colonists for any kind of job. 29 A group of 40 armed colonizers, headed by Carlos Young Waldemann, leaves

		Villa Carlota to join the forces defending the Second Empire in Mérida.
<b>February</b>		
	5 French evacuate México City.	17 Republicans occupy Ticul. 21 Pablo Tommasek, signing as Commander of the Fuerza Armada Alemana, reports to Salazar Ilarregui from Umán.
	— Battles are being fought in Sisal, Ticul and Campeche. 13 Maximilian leads part of his army to Querétaro.	
<b>March</b>		
	9 Republican troops place Querétaro under siege. 12 The last French troops leave Veracruz.	— Pablo Tommasek leaves for New York. — Padre Garma arrives in Santa Elena. — The clergymen's correspondence between Santa Elena-Ticul-Pustunich-Mérida would break down because of the war until the end of June. — It is unsafe to travel.
<b>April</b>		
— Baron Friedrich von Gerolt, attempts to get a commitment from the United States to look after the Prussian citizens in México.	1 The state of Yucatán is declared under siege. Salazar Ilarregui takes over as General Military Commander. 12 Republicans lay siege to México City.	
<b>May</b>		
	15 Querétaro falls to the Republican army. Maximilian is captured.	
<b>June</b>		
	15 Salazar Ilarregui capitulates. Negotiates freedom and passports for those who fought under his command, among them some of the members of the Fuerza Armada Alemana. 19 Maximilian is executed in Querétaro. — Republican President Benito Juárez returns to México City.	— Part of the German settlers leave to New York, as per the arrangements reached by Salazar Ilarregui during the Second Empire's capitulation. — Padre Garma leaves Santa Elena for Ticul. 25 The correspondence between padre Ortegón and his superiors in Mérida is re-established.
<b>July</b>		
	— Residency permits issued by the Second Empire are considered invalid.	
<b>August</b>		
	— The Yucatecan newspapers start a campaign against those who supported the Empire.	5 Decree referring to the houses abandoned by the colonists in Pustunich and Santa Elena is published. Two heads of family claim their properties. 10 Emilio MacKinney's open



		letter asking to help the German colonists left stranded in Sisal is published in the official Yucatecan newspaper.
<b>September</b>		
		5 Consul Kruttschnitt reports to Baron von Gerolt that a few German families—former colonists in Yucatán—have arrived in New Orleans.
<b>December</b>		
— The US's diplomatic representatives in México still have no specific instructions in regards to protecting Prussian citizens still in the country.		

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**Glossary**

<b>Alcalde</b>	Mayor of the colonists of Villa Carlota.
<b>Campesino</b>	Self-identification used by the men in Santa Elena. <b>Labrador</b> and <b>milpero</b> are also synonyms.
<b>Colono</b>	Term used by the German-speaking settlers of Villa Carlota to identify themselves.
<b>Criollo</b>	First generation persons of Spanish settler's descents, already born in México.
<b>Cruzoob</b>	Maya and non-Maya rebels who fought against the oligarchy in the so-called Caste War of Yucatán.
<b>Hacendado</b>	The owner of a hacienda. Also called <b>terrateniente</b> .
<b>Hacienda</b>	A commercial estate—ranch, farm or plantation— with resident workers.
<b>Hispanic</b>	Refers here to members of the Yucatecan elite. See <b>mestizo</b> .
<b>Juez de Paz</b>	Municipal Commissary. A head official of a small village.
<b>Meridano</b>	Hispanic inhabitant of the city of Mérida.
<b>Mestizo</b>	Used here as synonym for Hispanic. A person of Spanish and Indian blood who, at least culturally, identifies himself with Spanish culture.
<b>Natural</b>	Person born in Santa Elena.
<b>Padre</b>	A Catholic priest.
<b>Prefecto Político</b>	Political Prefect. A politically appointed administrator of a district. In the case of this analysis, that of Yucatán.
<b>Rancho</b>	A small commercial state. Can also be called <b>sitio</b> .
<b>Subprefecto Político</b>	In regards to Villa Carlota, the Subprefect of Ticul.
<b>Terrenos baldíos</b>	Lands of the national domain.
<b>Vecino</b>	An inhabitant of Santa Elena.
<b>Yucateco</b>	Hispanic inhabitant of the state of Yucatán.

„Bittgesuch der deutschen Colonisten Villa Carlotta, Santa Elena, um Befreiung ihrer drückenden Lage.“

1866.  
Letra I. n.º 165.  
Solicitud de los Colonos de Sta  
Elena, acusando a' el Sr. von Hippel  
de falsedad y no cumplimiento  
a' las promesas que les hizo al  
traerlos.

Solicitud de los Colonos de Sta Elena, acusando á Mr. von Hippel de falsedad y no cumplimiento á las promesas que les hizo al traerlos, Mérida, Aug. 23, 1866, AGEY, PE, c. 156. [T: Request in which the colonists of Santa Elena accuse Mr. von Hippel of having misled them and not honoring the promises he made at the time of recruiting].



Villa Carlotta d. 14/8. 18.

Kaiserliche Mexikanische  
Regierung

Sucátaro  
in  
Zacatecas.

Vittgefuhr der deutschen  
Konsisten Villa Carlotta,  
unter Elmer, um Befrei-  
ung ihrer drückenden Lage.

① Auf Grund eines vom Herrn  
Director v. Hippel und mit thei-  
gerlichem Decret verfahrenen, in  
Deutschland ausgegebenen Broschü-  
re, wo schon auf dem Faltblatt  
Sucátaro, als ein überaus fruchtbares  
Land geschildert ward, sowie auf  
mündliche und schriftliche Ver-  
sicherung des Herrn Director vom  
Hippel, haben wir uns veranlaßt  
lassen, nach Sucátaro hinzuwandern,  
sind aber dadurch nicht weniger  
als glücklich geworden.

② Das in Artikel 3 besagte Land  
haben wir zwar angewiesen,  
halten, daselbe ist, aber weder  
vermessen noch abgegrenzt, sowie  
die in Art. 8 genannten Schweine,  
Hühner und auch theilweise  
Fische die besagte Büchsen  
nebst 10 Stück Patronen sind  
ausgegeben worden. (Doppelgange  
hingegen bloß gegen Bezahlung.)  
und das in Art. 9 angegebene  
Proviand empfangen wie jetzt noch  
abwecheltlich kaiserlich die Per-  
son auf 8 Tage 16 Lth Mais 2 Pfd.  
Reis 12 Lth Pfeffer 16 Lth Zucker  
5 Medio Fleisch 6 Medio  
Fettgeloß

③ Es ist aber für jede Familie un-  
möglich von dem allein leben zu  
können, es muß außerdem noch



täglich Geld zum nothwendigsten fein und deshalb ist jeder Colonist genöthigt auf Arbeit zu gehen, und was jetzt schon fast Sagerreifen geschehen muß. Außerdem sind unsere Kleider, Schuhe und Wäsche abzuwaschen; wovon wir neues schaffen? Wir werden also gezwungen sein, nackt und bloß dorthin zu gehen.

④ Herr Director von Lippert hat in der Broschüre die Baumwollencultur dem Senique und Tabackbau als sehr erträglich geschildert; kann aber ein Colonist, wenn er nicht Capitalist ist, eines von diesen allen annehmen, denn wie viel Arbeit und wie viel Geld kostet nicht die Anlegung eines von diesen Producten, und wie viele Jahre vergehen, ehe er etwas davon zu essen hat, was er in dieser Zeit leben.

Ebenso mit dem Taback, welcher sehr viel Mühe kostet, jedoch so viel zu gewinnen, daß wir leben können ist sehr unmöglich.

⑤ Jedem Versuch hier deutsche Früchte oder Fruchtgewächse



und ubauen ist fehlgeschlagen,  
und bleibt uns nur allein der  
Meisbau übrig und das der  
schlecht lohnt, und wenig Gelob  
bringt, ist längst als Thatfache  
bekannt; und doch sind wir  
ganz allein auf das Hinngerwiesen,  
wie sollen wir da bestehen, wie  
sollen wir da existieren? —

⑥ Es bleibt uns also nichts übrig  
als wie die hiesigen Eingebor-  
nen Indianer von dem Herrn  
und Wasser zu leben, deshalb  
sind wir, nämlich nicht nach  
Tucatan ausgewandert, und  
der Herr von Hippo hatte da  
nicht nöthig, uns von unserer  
Heimath, aus unserer gewohn-  
ten Lebensweise herauszuwei-  
chen und hierher zu spendieren.  
Der Herr von Hippo sagt  
wir hätten zu Hause gehun-  
gen, eben so liegt es da zu  
haben wie hier erst Aussicht.  
Wie nobel steht das in Deutschland  
sowohl nicht der niedrigste  
beiter, bei geringem Lohn.

⑦ Und der Herr von Hippo  
schreibt, die Halbinsel Tucatan  
soll bereist zu haben, mithin  
auch die hiesige Lebensweise  
kennt, und als geborner  
und gezogener Deutscher auch  
die deutsche Lebensweise kennt.



+ so musste er, wenn er gerecht sein wollte, von einer Colonisierung Yucatans durch Deutsche gänzlich absehen.

⑧ Es scheint aber, als hätte Herr von Hippel sein Interesse in Yago gefasst, um als Colonisations-Director zu fungieren; um uns Existenz zu haben, wie aber sind dadurch ganz und gar unglücklich geworden, denn unsere Zukunft gestaltet sich trauriger; Hier werden nicht ebenso wenig wie Deutsche Gewächse gedeihen, sondern hinwelken und Eingehen. Unsere Gesundheit, unsere Kräfte, sind fast schon dahin, und eine Besserung unserer Lage haben wir nicht; hier können wir durch den größten Fleiß die größte Anstrengung nicht vorwärts kommen. Und das viele Geld, was die Regierung für uns ausgegeben hat ist verloren. Hier können wir es nie bekommen.

⑨ Wer ein deutscher ist kann



nur wissen wie sehr er an  
deutsche Früchte hängt, ohne  
sie denn er nicht leben, mehr,  
vorne von uns Colonisten, die  
früher gesund und stark waren,  
schleichen jetzt wie Schatten  
herum, und wünschen: sie  
hätten dieses Land nicht  
gesehen.

(10) Ein Viehstapel ist hier  
nicht zu schaffen, da ist  
zu wenig Futter, selbst  
während der Regenzeit,  
und außer dieser ist es gänz-  
lich unmöglich; das hat freilich  
von den Colonisten Keiner  
geahnt, das erst hier das  
Futter für das Vieh von  
den Wipfeln der Bäume  
holen müsse, der Viehstand  
aber ist dem Landbauer sein  
Reichtum, der bringt Geld,  
da ist zu leben, denn Milch  
und Butter sind reichlich  
und kräftig.

(11) Ebenso wenig ist ein Pflug  
gängiges Feld herzustellen  
und so wie hier, die Saat  
mit dem Stocke eingestochen,  
die Ernte auf dem Rücken  
zu Hause getragen werden  
muß, sieht es traurig aus  
mit dem Feldbau, denn



ebenso mit dem Bebehren  
 denn rückfarn muß er sein  
 Leben künftigen, hat nichts  
 als Entbehrung zu ertragen,  
 Er kann es nie zu etwas hin-  
 gen und Herr Director von  
 Hingel hat nie gesagt da  
 wir auf solchen Stein Klippen  
 gesetzt würden, kein Colonist  
 wäre hierher gekommen.

(12) Wir Deutschen haben keine  
 Schuld und doch müssen wir  
 so viele von uns leiden, denn  
 sie können das Klima nicht  
 ertragen, auch die Speisern ist  
 den Trägern nicht gewohnt,  
 es vergeht wohl kein Tag ohne  
 nicht in jedem Hause die Trü-  
 nen fließen, und die Elenden  
 laßt werden, von dem armen  
 unschuldigen Kindern die  
 das schreien, bekommen wir  
 nun bald Brodt und Fleis-  
 toffel, welchen Familien  
 weiter reicht, bei dem lau-  
 der Kinder nicht das Fleis-  
 haben es diese Kinder ver-  
 schuldet daß <sup>hier</sup> so leiden  
 müssen, Was haben wir  
 Eltern gethan, warum sind  
 wir in diese Falle gegangen

(13) Daß nur Herr von Hingel  
 uns jetzt, als Arbeitsleute  
 dem Trünke ergebene Leute  
 proklamirt, schlägt er  
 sich zu selbst ins Gesicht  
 denn er ist dann seiner



Instruktion sehr schlecht  
nach gekommen; darin ist  
doch gesagt, daß Trinker, und  
Spieler, und Verbrecher nicht  
auf Sucasitan zugelassen werden,  
und der Herr von Hymet hat  
da eine ganze Schiffsladung  
voll Leuten hergebracht und  
so viel Kosten verursacht.  
Es ist aber sehr traurig, daß  
Männer zu solchen Mani-  
pulationen seine Zuflucht neh-  
men muß.

(14)

Es ergeht deshalb an eine hochkei-  
serliche Regierung die Bitte  
vorstehendes der Wahrheit ge-  
mäßes, das Gesuch wohl zu  
erwägen, uns Abhilfe anzei-  
chen zu lassen, uns entweder  
in den Mexikanischen Staaten  
andere noch besser unter zu  
bringen, oder zurück in unsere  
Heimath zu schaffen, nach be-  
findlicher Berichtstattung an  
Ihre Majestät dem Kaiser

Deutsche Colonie

Villa Carlotta Ort Elena

Am 12. August 1866.

Der Wahrheit gemäß unterzeichnen sich  
auf umgekehrter Seite



~~Wilhelm Vetter~~  
~~August Löffler~~  
~~Leopold Brande~~  
 Ernst Langner.

Gottlieb Müller  
 Johann Brande.

August Grole.  
 Heinrich Vöhr.

Leopold Löffler.  
 Ernst Langner.

Leopold Löffler.

W. Müller  
 Friedrich Knauth.

August Künze  
 Wilhelm Löffler.

August Löffler.

Leopold Löffler.

August Dörfel.

Louis Eckelt.

Friedrich Löffler.

Friedrich Löffler.

August Löffler.

August Löffler.

Florian Löffler.

Gottlieb Löffler.

Gottlieb Löffler.

Louis Löffler.

August Löffler.

Heinrich Löffler.

August Löffler.

August Löffler.

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August Löffler.

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### Archives

AGAY	Archivo General de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán (Mérida)
AGEY	Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán (Mérida)
JC	Justicia Civil
JP	Justicia Penal
I	Iglesia
M-T	Municipios-Ticul
PE	Poder Ejecutivo
RC	Registro Civil
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación (México City)
FSS	Fondo Segundo Imperio
AHAY	Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán (Mérida)
BNM	Biblioteca Nacional de México (México City)
CAIHY	Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán (Mérida)
GStPK	Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Berlin)
ÖSt	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Vienna)
KMM	Archiv seiner Majestät des Kaisers Maximilian I. von Mexiko
RCSE	Registro Civil de Santa Elena (Yucatán)
StAH	Staatsarchiv Hamburg
UTAL	University of Texas at Arlington Libraries / Special Collections Division
SIP	The José Salazar Ilarregui Papers

### Periodicals

AAz	<i>Allgemeine Auswanderungszeitung</i> (Germany)
ASA	<i>Anhaltinischer Staats-Anzeiger</i> (Germany)
DI	<i>Diario del Imperio</i> (México City)
Lrp	<i>La razón del pueblo</i> (Mérida)
PoDM	<i>Periódico oficial del Departamento de Mérida</i>
PoDY	<i>Periódico oficial del Departamento de Yucatán</i>

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Augsburg, den 11.07.2007

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